

The Living Atonement

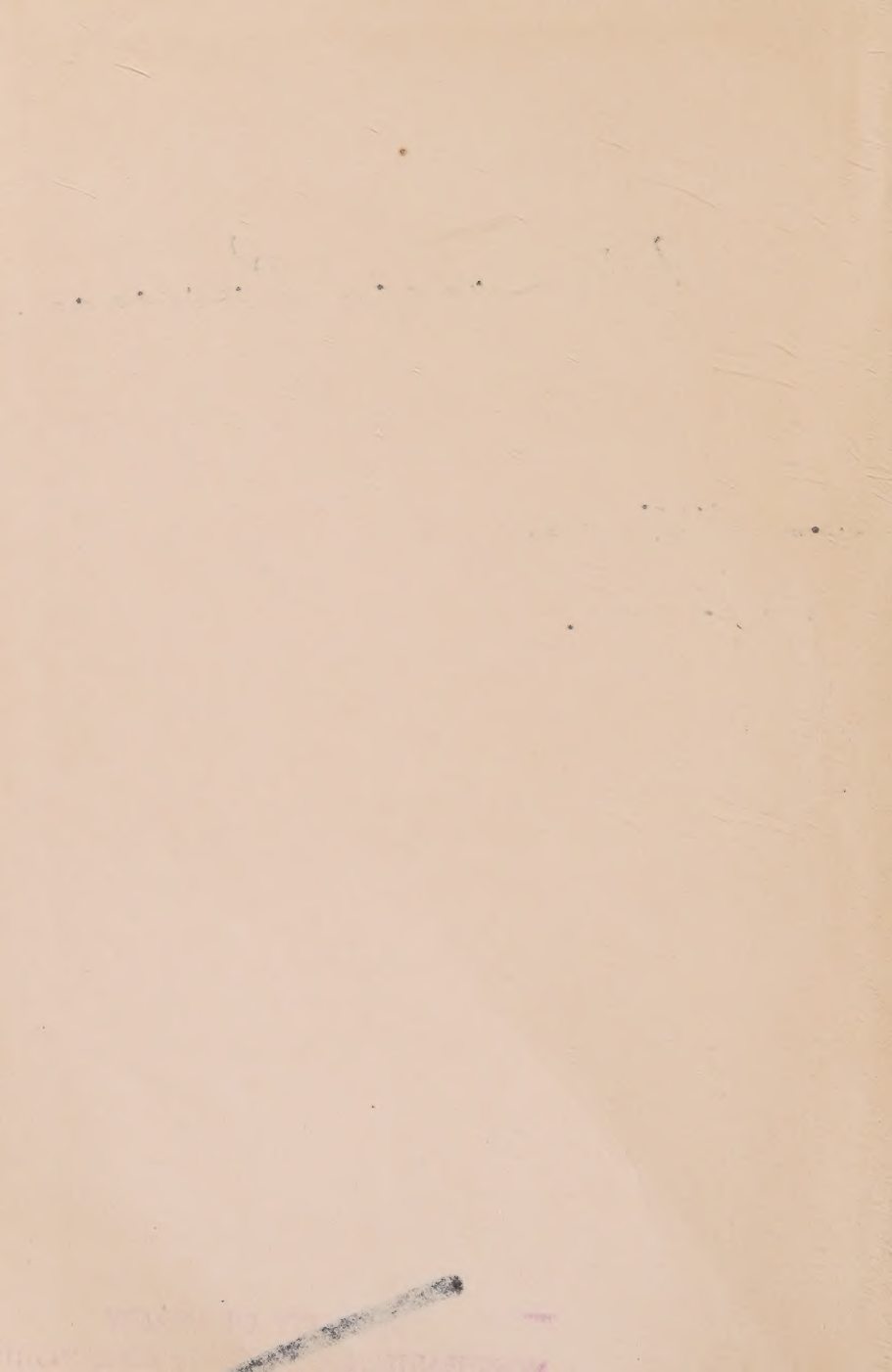


Champion

Mr. Duncan Buchanan.

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THE LIVING ATONEMENT

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THE LIVING ATONEMENT

Benjamin By
JOHN B. CHAMPION, M. A., B. D. 1868-

"He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2 : 2)

"Who gave himself for our sins" (Gal. 1 : 4)

"He ever liveth to make intercession" (Heb. 7 : 25)



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To

THE MEMORY OF
OUR DEAR CHILD

Helen Jean Champion

WHOSE PRECIOUS LIFE PASSED
OUT TO GOD AT THE TIME
OF THE COMPLETING
OF THIS BOOK

FOREWORD

VAST, infinitely vast and equally deep is the ocean of truth. Whether great or small, there is no sea which is not somewhere breaking into waves. It may be that beyond the narrow bounds of our present horizon the ocean of truth lies restful in a glassy calm. Here, at least, it breaks into the billows of human thinking. Waves do not wear out the sea. Book may follow book as wave follows wave; but the old ocean of truth is as full and boundless as ever. Along the shores of time the wavelets of our thinking die; but the majestic deep of divine truth rolls on as before.

An age characterized by increasing regard for the word of God cannot fail to be one of religious progress; and the present is peerlessly prolific in books on the Bible. Never will the Scriptures be classed with effete literature, for more of God is in them than in any other book. Man cannot outgrow the means of his growth; and the Book of books is necessary to his religious development. Advance is never away from it, but into it. The altar fires of earth blaze up and die down; but the same sun that greeted the wondering eyes of the first man shines on undimmed in the heavens. So we have the flick-

ering rays of religious books ; and we have the sun of literature, the Bible. New books are constantly replacing those whose light has waned. There is but one book, the light of which has never failed us. All others tend to embers and ashes.

In the nature of the case the word of God must be our standard of authority on the subject of the atonement. It is in God's light that we see his light ; and he who is the Light of the world has left us the light of his word. The faces of all the Christian centuries have been agleam from the unconsumed burning on Calvary ; but each age has had to catch its own reflection of this light of redemption. To reflect the rays of the atonement is to be transfigured by them ; to interpret Christ's work of salvation is to impart therewith one's own personality. The more important thing, however, is not the form of the reflecting face ; it is this light divine. Soon we disappear into the silent, lone, mysterious darkness, and others replace us. There are new reflections from new faces, but the light is ever the same. The greatest service possible in a book on the atonement is in furnishing men with the incentive to behold for themselves THE LIVING LIGHT.

Any one tracing through the last century the discussions on the subject of the atonement, finds that the farther back he goes the less are they in touch with the thought of to-day. Because we are not living in the summer-time in which these flowers blossomed, we see not the beauty in which

they bloomed; and fail to catch the perfume which they then distilled. The thistle blossoms of this year are more fragrant by far than the dried roses of last year. The thorniest book of present-day discussion has power of contact with this age, which is wanting in the best books of bygone days. The dead past and the living present are separated by a continual burial process. Even the leaves of the theological tree reach their autumn. They would not die and silently flutter down, if their work were not done; yet it may not all be done when they fall. They may turn to mould, and their elements enter again into the life of this mighty mangrove tree, and bud forth anew in numberless, verdant, breathing fronds.

For a long time no statement of the atonement has met with general acceptance; nevertheless, a new treatment of the subject, adapted to our own day, is confidently expected. At a recent religious congress one of the subjects discussed was: "The Doctrine of the Atonement in Terms of Modern Thought."

A report of the discussion said:

"For all the rest (eight of the nine speakers) the old terms had lost all meaning or been modified out of all resemblance to their historic significance. . . The new way of thinking is gathering an impulse, an intensity, a passion of its own. We are no longer to be content with saying, 'The atonement is too large for us; we have no theory of it; we can have none.' A new doctrine, ethical, psychological, soci-

ological, biological, and all the rest—still looming shadowy in the mist—but looming large and drawing rapidly near, begins to be discernible. To whatever else they were indifferent, no one of these speakers was indifferent to Christ. He commands not less, but ever more completely the love and allegiance of his disciples. We can only wait and hope.”¹

It is due to say that the material of this book came and took form after years of wandering in a jungle. The attempt to hew a way through the forest of the theories of the atonement was of no avail. Utterly lost in the heart of this vast continent, much time was spent traveling in a circle. At length a clear path was discovered. Its direction is as follows: JESUS CHRIST MADE ATONEMENT BY HIS DEATH IN THAT HIS DEATH MADE HIM ATONEMENT.

In acknowledging help received in the preparation of this book, it is difficult to know where to begin or where to end. The list of authors, teachers, and friends to whom unpayable debt is owed, would fill the book itself. In the literary revision of the text the assistance of a lifelong friend, William T. Daley, of 26 Broadway, New York City, and of another friend, Rev. Charles H. Emerson, M. A., of Brantford, Ontario, must be mentioned. While “Words pay no debts,” one does owe the acknowledgment that back of his efforts are the hidden props of many God-given friends.

J. B. C.

¹ W. B. Matteson, D. D., Baptist Congress 1908. (New York “Examiner.”)

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I

THEOLOGICAL EVOLUTION

Our Father! while our hearts unlearn
The creeds that wrong thy name,
Still let our hallowed altars burn
With faith's undying flame.

If mid the gathering storms of doubt
Our hearts grow faint and cold,
The strength we cannot live without
Thy love will not withhold.

—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

THE most distinctive and determinative element in modern theology is what we may term a new feeling for Christ. By this feeling its specific character is at once defined and expressed. . . Now, how has this new feeling for Christ affected constructive Christian theology? We have just seen that historical inquiry raises questions that belong to the philosophy of history, which is but the most concrete form of the philosophy alike of nature and man. We cannot conceive and describe the supreme historical Person without coming face to face with the profoundest of all the problems in theology; but then we may come to them from an entirely changed point of view, through the Person that is to be interpreted, rather than through the interpretations of his person. When this change is effected, theology ceases to be scholastic, and becomes historical; and this precisely represents the change which it has undergone or is undergoing. The speculative counterpart of the new feeling for Christ is the rejuvenescence of theology.

—*Principal A. M. Fairbairn, D. D.*

CHAPTER ONE

THEOLOGICAL EVOLUTION

IN the beginning God made the world, and the beginning of the world was in him. God, in its origin, was the sure promise of God in its development. The divine immanence is the condition and the pledge of progress. God in the world and the world in God move ever on to greater good. The world is on the upward way. The whole universe throbs with a divine movement. God is the Soul of its progress, the Companion of its evolution. All creation is striving to keep step with its Maker. God and his worlds march on together. The face of each realm is forward; its stride is onward. God leads on.

I. Forefront in the advance of the universe is man. He in himself is a galaxy of worlds. Along various lines he has been steadily progressing. His mind is on the march of conquest in the realm of truth. Within this vast domain there is ample room for endless progress. The world of truth is one of perfect order and endless variety. Distinction may be made between truth of expression and truth of that expressed, between truth of mind and of

morals, of heart and of life, of being and of becoming. The lowest order of truth is that of form, and the highest that of substance. *The truth highest in form and in substance is to be found in personality.* The mistake is often made of attempting to limit truth to the intellectual order. This, no doubt, occurs because of all other realms of truth having their counterpart in the intellectual.

Theology is a field of study. It is the study of truth in relation to God. It is the highest of all sciences. Theology is a science because enough of its truths and their relations are known to make an orderly presentation. It is a growing science because knowledge of its truths is on the increase. Theology, in its very nature, is an inexhaustible subject. It is not an independent study. All other sciences make contribution to it. Theology shares, therefore, in the general progress of human thought.

Scientific theology is not the only kind. There is a higher order. "The heart makes the theologian," we are told. There is a theology of the heart as well as of the head. The latter is an imperfect expression of the former. Scientific theology is compelled to make its statements in terms of the intellect. The highest order of theology, being the truth of life, cannot be reduced to mental terms without tremendous loss. The best theology is not found written upon the leaves of books; it is inscribed upon the pages of human life. The highest kind of theology is **LIVING THEOLOGY.**

II. A study of its history and phases reveals the fact that theology is subject to a law of evolution. The word evolution is here used in its best sense, as descriptive of the process of development. This term is not fitted to designate at the same time progress and primal origin. The theory of evolution has been much abused. This "Bucephalus" has been used as a cart-horse to the dump-heaps. Some day he will be restored to his place as snorting steed of battle; and upon him will mount some theological Alexander who will straightway conquer the world.

Theological evolution follows a natural order. Its advance may be marked in point of attention. Progress thus made is not peculiar to theology. It is found in all lines of study. Preaching may be taken as an example of it and of the naturalness of its order.

In the first stage, attention is centered upon the material of the sermon. The preacher may not know beforehand exactly what he will say. He thinks out his subject while speaking. Again, he may be endeavoring to recall what he did prepare; or having his notes or manuscript before him, his attention is fixed thereon. He is sermon-conscious.

The second stage is reached when attention is fixed upon delivery. Equally important with having something to say, is knowing how to say it. The preacher, having mastered the material of his sermon, concentrates his attention upon the art of

expression. He is then concerned with tone and inflection of voice, gesture, and posture. He is delivery-conscious.

In the third stage, attention is focused upon the audience. The preacher gives direct attention to his hearers. He is hearer-conscious. He now reaches the maximum of his power as a speaker. In the two former stages he had unconsciously held the attention of the congregation to the point of his own. They watched the doing of the thing, rather than listened for themselves. The speaker's attention, when centered upon the audience, directs their attention to themselves, and produces an atmosphere which is psychologically electric. Truth is then communicated by lightning flashes. Of course, the material of the sermon always limits the range of possible evolution. Should the preaching consist in the flash of empty fulmination, heat-lightning, and stage thunder, advance in power is impossible. Truth in substance must precede progress in the presenting of its form.

The art of the theologian is also largely the art of attention. The perfection of the art comes by perfecting the artist. There is no evolution of theology apart from evolution of the theologian. Here, also, higher objects of attention replace the lower. Attention is first fixed on system, then on truth, finally on Jesus Christ. Three types of theology result: the systematic, the critical, and the positive.

III. The young theologian in the first stage of his evolution adopts the ready-made system of a spiritual father or a beloved teacher. Youth naturally accepts without question the social, the political, and the ecclesiastical systems which it finds in vogue. It is natural for youth to accept also the theological system which charges the very atmosphere of home, school, and church. Once in possession of the individual, the system rules, schools, and molds him. Calvinism, Arminianism, or some other ism, is then lord of all it surveys on the little island of personality.

In this stage the system is everything. It alone is theology; it alone is essential. The individual stands ready to defend it at any cost. He argues for it, battles for it, and lives for it. All truths are judged by their adaptability to it. Scripture itself receives no other interpretation than that which is in harmony with the system. The order of procedure is from the system to facts, and not the reverse. "The survival of the fittest," is determined by system-fitness.

Growth in this period is marked by the refining and modifying of the master-system, or the exchanging of it for some other system. The training in this stage is a good one. The system instinct is divine; but it has its limitations. Feeding upon system alone, the theologian becomes spiritually dwarfed. Some day dissatisfaction with the resulting sickening stagnation arises. This revulsion is the promise of an evolution. Perhaps some start-

ling fact throws its searchlight glare upon the defects and deformities of the beloved system. The discovery is made that systems are but the tentative arrangement of human thought, rather than the truth itself. Because of this revulsion the hasty conclusion is now reached that all systems of man's thought are but elaborate methods of sandbank building upon the shores of time where soon the wind and waves in ruthless sport toss into oblivion the toil of a lifetime.

Passing out of the system chamber, which has been for some time the home of his mind, the young theologian discovers that its little window, which has been light itself to him, is not light, but only one of its dim inlets. Blinking in the brightness of broad daylight, he sees before him a well-trod path leading to an imposing structure with broad windows and radiant skylights. Entering, he finds the building everywhere stored with scientific paraphernalia. He is now in the laboratory of truth. He has reached the second stage of his theological development.

IV. The critical period is now entered, and attention is forthwith centered upon truth, but upon intellectual truth only. The second stage usually answers to the college and seminary period. It is not, however, confined to this time. The tremendous advance of education in our day has brought about an unnatural lengthening of the ordinary time spent

in this stage. It has also induced some theologians to settle down in it for the rest of their lives; but this, of course, is an abnormal condition. When there will have come an advance in religious life equal to that in education, the theology of the second stage will no longer predominate. There may be cycles in which each of the three types of theology in turn predominate. The nature of the foremost movement of general progress accounts for this; and determines also which of the three types of theology may be in the ascendancy at any given time.

Much good results from the second period, notwithstanding many passing through it become sadly upset by the breaking up of the venerated systems and the plowing up of time-worn paths of thought. Many have their dignity ruffled by being dragged bodily out of old-time ruts. The sophomore critics never fail to haze the poor freshmen who are slow in readjustment. As college and seminary days are appreciated in a larger and saner way long after they are over, so with the days of critical thought and unrest. Their incidental unpleasantnesses are finally forgotten, and their services remembered.

The second stage is not marked by constructiveness. The first period could not be so accused; but in it the theologian was not overcareful in the selection of his building material. In the first stage it is the relating, and in the second the verifying of truth, which is of primary interest. One tends

to be oversystematic, and the other overcritical. Americans say of themselves, "We first overdo, then do." Mortals everywhere are prone to extremes. We had our bicycle craze. Those who can afford it, have now the motor-car craze. The critical craze all may afford. Even crazes, however, have an educative power not to be despised.

The subject-matter of religion includes far more than the intellectual, and criticism of its material cannot proceed upon an exclusively intellectual basis without leading to endless vagaries. The growing critic becomes some day thoroughly dissatisfied with the narrow line which intellectual criticism affords. There is an evolution of criticism itself, which naturally advances from the intellectual into the broader criticism of heart and experience. It was to the latter kind that Jesus ever invited men. The third stage of theological evolution is not far off when the scope and method of criticism are thus enlarged.

V. In the third period of the evolution of theology, the critical is replaced by the positive. In the first stage, the question asked was: "Does this help the system?" In the second, the challenge was: "Is this true?" In the third, the inquiry is: "Does this help the spiritual life?" In the first period, there was sought the positive to a chosen system of thought; in the second, the positive to intellectual truth; and in the third, the positive to religious life. Being the science of a life, instead of the intellectual fraction

thereof, it is the theology of the whole soul. In it all the powers of personality share in the same experience and combine in the same testimony, the established certainty of that experience and life.

When the third stage in the evolution of the sermon was reached, its material was not discounted in value, nor the worth of good delivery discredited. The place to which their worth entitled them, was accorded. So, when the third stage of theology is reached, all system and criticism are not abandoned. It would be a revolution, not an evolution, if it were otherwise. Positive theology is not unsystematic and uncritical. Disorder and untruth would be decided hindrances to it. Faith in and love for Jesus Christ need orderliness and truthfulness. The higher the character of him to whom they are given, the more faith and devotion are embarrassed by mental slovenliness and lack of love for the truth. Faith of the heart does not induce paralysis in the brain. Positive theology is not pusillanimous.

There were faith and love in the system and critical stages; but there they were related primarily to abstract truth. In the larger sphere of the third stage of theology, faith, love, and devotion are centered upon the highest of all objects. As God is infinitely greater than system and abstraction, faith in and love for him are infinitely greater than faith in and love for them. After all, full-orbed faith and love are to be found only in the relation between persons. That is positive theology which

expresses the personal faith and love which lays hold on Jesus Christ. Not that the theologian loves system and intellectual truth the less, but Christ the more. Toward this divine event in the evolution of theology, its earlier stages ever move.

The center of attention in the third and last stage of theology is God in Christ. For the Christian, there is no necessary distinction between faith in the Son and in the Father. They are one; and faith in them is one. The very genius of the life of the Son is faith in, and love for, the Father. Christ is never the enemy of any good or of any truth. What is negative to the deity of Christ is never really positive to faith in, and love for, God. What is positive in devotedness to Christ is never negative in loyalty to God and truth. *What is negative to Christ is never positive to good; what is positive in good is, in the end, positive in loyalty to Christ.* In loyalty to him inheres all loyalty to truth. In him is to be found the adjustment of all our allegiances and interests. These, in their very nature, grow out of our faith. High and holy as is interest in the welfare of man, in Jesus Christ are found its deepest motive, its highest plane, its greatest power and effectiveness.

Interest in intellectual truth cannot be accorded the highest place, for the worth of such truth depends upon the value of the personal relationship which it serves. There is no spiritual life apart from the interests begotten by personal relation-

ship to Christ. The interest which he begets in the soul is of the highest order and widest range. Quality of life is measured by the quality of its interests. There is to be found in the interests which Christ begets the highest means for enlarging the soul and the greatest room for expanding its life. Unfolding spiritual life is the central value and verity of Christian experience. *The truth of this unfolding spiritual life constitutes the material of positive theology.*

Christ is the heart of all system, the key-truth of all truth, and the center of all spiritual relationships. Fount of all spiritual life, and source of all live, religious thought, he is naturally the soul of positive theology. Without him theology must be but a cemetery of still-born thoughts. Religious thought must find its life in Him who is the living truth. It is as the Lord himself said: "I am the way," the true system; "the truth," the central reality; "the life," the life for all, the life of life, the substance of religious vitality.

Systems depend for their value upon that which is organized by them. Mere system is nothing. Social systems are above the intellectual, and the ethical and spiritual above the social. System reaches its highest value in divine relations. Intellectual truth depends for its value upon personal truth. Truth has higher value and added meaning in each of its ascending realms. In the intellectual, it is the reality of thought; in the ethical, it is the reality of moral life;

and in the personal, it is the reality of spiritual being in which are organized the lower forms of truth. Jesus Christ is the reality and, therefore, the true and full revelation of divine personality. He is truth in deepest mystery, largest disclosure, and richest significance.

The highest order of theology is that which rises from the profoundest depths of soul, and expresses the vastest breadths of truth. The inspiration and substance of such is found in the Christ of God, and in him alone. All is not yet known about him; and new theological thought is therefore bound to appear. Religion is forever either dying or developing. There is the possibility of theological evolution, because there is the possibility of theological reversion or atavism. A great teacher has said that the world has seen as much devolution as evolution. Side by side in all realms they are to be found. Reversion to lower type occurs in theology as elsewhere. There is a world of difference between "New Theology" in evolution and "New Theology" in reversion. Theology is included in the sum of things "new in Christ Jesus." Much of what passes to-day under the name of progress is but glorified decay. Much of what now seems to be retrograde movement is but progress in disguise. How shall we distinguish between them? It was George Macdonald who said:

All growth that is not toward God
Is growing to decay.

II

CRITICAL THEOLOGY AND IDEALISM

CRITICISM seems to be accidental and sporadic rather than systematic and premeditated (in those earlier days when all the sciences lacked systematic exposition). Nevertheless, critical arguments—we may almost say *the* critical arguments one and all, as later developed by the constant practice of criticism—are used throughout this stage. It is therefore an error to speak of the ancient times as though criticism was unknown in them, or of the history of criticism as dating from the latter half of the eighteenth century.

—*Prof. Andrew C. Zenos.*

CHAPTER TWO

CRITICAL THEOLOGY AND IDEALISM

There is the law that the richness of theology depends upon its source and spirit. This has illustration on every hand. In furnishing an example of this law elsewhere, forgive a second reference to preaching, for nothing lies so close to theology as the sermon.

I. There are three types of preachers, the intellectual, the emotional, and the spiritual. The first finds his source-world in thought. He is didactic rather than prophetic, mentally inspiring rather than spiritually edifying. The second depends upon the emotional source-world. He draws the crowd, for, in general, sensation is more prized than instruction. We need not be surprised that such is the case. This preference comes from the brain-weariness and heart-hunger of the masses. Emotional preaching, however, intoxicates rather than strengthens; and the congregation holds together only so long as the intoxication lasts. The third type, while using the intellectual and emotional, draws mainly from the deeper spiritual sources. This preacher holds that he himself needs more preparation than the sermon.

His personality, when fully prepared, becomes a vortex whence the swirl of divine forces makes out-rush. To stir the emotions needs but a pathetic story well told. To save the soul as well as thrill it, and to inspire it to religious activity, is a more serious matter. The more the preacher's personality is attuned to the divine Spirit, the greater the realms from which he draws, and the more his preaching accomplishes in harmonizing this world to God.

An increasing number are saying at the present time, "We love religion; but we hate preaching." This may be the fault of the hearer, or of the preacher. Failing to create interest in what he is saying, the preacher lacks in power of helpfulness. It is useless to say that the sermon may be rich, though not interesting. To whom, in that case, is it rich? The sermon setting forth the barrenness and failure of the life which invariably accompanies the itching ear, could not fail to interest the possessor of it. Then the itching would turn to tingling. "The Sword of the Lord" is exceedingly interesting to people when its straight thrust finds them. God's thought is of compelling interest; and that is most God's thought which best expresses the pre-eminent spiritual need. The sermon wearies more often because it is not the word of God, than because it is.

The theologian of to-day is much in the same plight as the preacher of the present time. Men are

saying, "We love God; but we hate theology." This noble science has become a byword and a hissing, a synonym for the dull, dry, and uninteresting. Alas! What was once so rich in honor is now so poor that none will do it reverence. We cannot go back to the old theology; because it is as out of date as the science of the last century. A "New Theology" has appeared; but so far it has done little more than build up a Babel tower of negations. The confusion of tongues has come, and the scattering has resulted.

The limited source and the critical spirit of modern theology are responsible in a large measure for its unpopularity. Being mainly negative in nature, a critical theology is unable to meet the great constructive needs of religious life. Theology is full of interest, strong in saving and edifying truth, and characterized by the spirit of helpfulness in proportion as it is Christ-inspired and Christ-filled. It is not Christ, but intellectual truth which critical theology seeks; and it cannot be richer than the fount whence it springs. The stream cannot rise higher than its source. Preaching and theology have precisely the same work to do in expressing the fulness of the mind, heart, and will of God. Their sources must correspond with this work to be done, or it will remain undone. An intellectual source for either must prove disappointing; yea, even disastrous. From what a fulness of life did apostolic preaching and theology arise! How well

Paul mastered the art of combining religion and theology! For him they had a common living source. Both were rich, because drawn from the richest of source-worlds, "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

II. The theology of the philosopher may look well in a book, the naturalistic theology of the scientist may seem to be in close touch with the thought of to-day, and the writings of the critical theologian may be valued for their high estimate of intellectual truth; but all these types have serious limitations and attendant dangers. If theology, the science of religion, is to prove as helpful as other sciences are in their respective realms, it must meet the spiritual rather than the intellectual problems of the time.

The present spiritual situation calls, as it has ever done, for intellectual honesty; but it requires vastly more. It demands also the moral and spiritual honesty that saves from sin, and extends the kingdom of God in a world which is bankrupt toward God. Every life, however poor, is a sermon—a theology. The poorer the sermon which a man lives, the better the sermon which he demands from the pulpit, and justly so, for the more serious the case, the more skilful should be the services of the physician; yet only the lives which preach the best can best appreciate the preaching of the best. The Athenian ear would ever hear the preaching of the

new. When the hearer's interest is true, his desire is that he himself should be new; and to him the preaching of the living Christ is ever new.

Never has a period demanded so much from the pulpit, the church, and the Bible; and never has a period—thanks to the critical spirit—been less capable of receiving their triune ministry. This is the noonday of educational progress; but the danger of the school is ever that of failing to carry men through the critical period of their development. The perennial peril of the university is that of producing a brood of professional critics who are stunted by failure to realize the full meaning of truth, because of their worship of intellectual truth. The critical-period fever is like certain diseases of childhood, from which the patient must completely recover or settle in a state of chronic debility. The writings of one who has settled down in the critical stage for the rest of his life should not be taken too seriously, be he mere student or most learned professor. His is a case of arrested development. Feeling that something is wrong, and not realizing that the wrong lies within himself, he imagines that everything which he touches needs pulling down. Dwarfed because of remaining permanently in a state that should be transitional, his judgment and all his other mental processes cannot be quite trustworthy. The conqueror of old made a solitude, and called it peace. The destructive critic of to-day makes a desolation, and calls it truth.

The furnace of criticism is in the present time heated seven times hotter than heretofore. In this white heat some slag is certain to separate from the useful ore. The crime of to-day is the putting forth of this slag as the ripest theology of modern scholarship. The peril of the critic and of critical theology is not a peculiar one. Every one tends to think of his own as central to all other work. It is but natural that the teacher should reduce Christ's redemption to salvation by teaching. It is but natural that the critic should interpret the Christian life by critical processes. Tennyson speaks of "the narrowing lust of gold." There is also the narrowing lust of criticism, "the defect of its virtue."

Another danger of critical theology is that of starving both writer and reader. It is a weakening diet that quickly results in spiritual anemia. The work of criticism is not adapted to produce or to develop spiritual receptivity. Even after the most reverent and painstaking criticism, the soul finds itself in a mood that hinders the receiving of nourishment. This mood must be banished before the spiritual man can enjoy the good things set before him on the banquet table of the Lord's bounties. It is true there is the critical stage in spiritual development; but the critical faculty may be over-developed, and thereby arrest the growth of the spiritual nature as a whole.

What the analytical chemistry of bread is to a hungry man, critical theology is to the soul. *If*

religion were an intellectual matter only, criticism might nourish and satisfy us. Criticising the menu is a poor substitute for eating. There is no spiritual nutriment in the critic's decision that a passage of Scripture was not written by J, nor by E, but by D, even when he is so sure that he writes *q. e. d.* Every religious truth has its corresponding activity of the soul. Such truth is fully assimilated only by means of this activity which is its natural counterpart; and the truth is then lived. Some truths cannot be lived; that is to say, they are intellectual, not religious truths. Some truths are bread to the soul; others are stone. It is usually truths of the latter class which occupy the attention of the critic. After the incendiary fires of destructive criticism have finished their work, what is there for the critic to eat? What his labor of love has produced: "He feedeth upon ashes."

Let us not imagine because of the dangers of over-developed criticism and of critical theology, that the critical faculty is of no use whatever. There is the necessary work of excavating, which must be done by criticism. Then positive faith lays a foundation, and builds anew from the depths into which criticism has descended. Critical theology being what is thrown out in this process of excavating, let who will camp upon this dump-heap. The moment a man begins to build, the critical faculty is not to the fore. Then it is assumed that criticism has done its work. The individual now becomes constructive

rather than critical. He can no longer be critical as to his foundation; he should be critical as to the material for his superstructure. But while he is criticising this material, he is not building. Constructive criticism is a contradiction in terms, except when it refers to perfecting the art or methods of criticism. It may be constructive in regard to its own work; as to all other work, it but judges and passes sentence as to the fitness for structural purposes. He is a poor builder who is a poor critic; but he is no builder who is only a critic. He is not a safe critic who is but a critic. The critic who is to be trusted is the critic which has proved his faith in himself and his principles by building a structure for the soul, a true habitation for God, or a workshop for his kingdom. This is but applying to himself the principles which he applies elsewhere.

Speculative criticism has produced pure clamor rather than pure truth; but is not the only kind. There is criticism and criticism. Retrograde criticism has been checked by its opposite kind. Fire has been fought with fire. Destructive criticism has been more than matched by defensive criticism. Higher criticism, misunderstood and consequently hated by many, has been shown to be of the devil, only when pressed into service for his ends. Biblical criticism has done a very valuable work; but it has yet to do its best work. The marvel is that it has accomplished so much when so sorely handicapped. Its work has been hindered by extremists, exploited by

theorists, and brought into disrepute by those who manifestly belonged elsewhere.

As an outcome of the critical investigations of the present time, the Bible has, in some respects, become a new book. This has not proved immediately helpful. That it will finally, ought not to be doubted. The more the historical method is used in interpreting the Scriptures, and the more known about them from any source, the more use must they prove to the cause of Christianity. True faith and true criticism are not necessarily opposed. Hand in hand they have walked along the broad highway of progress in the knowledge of God and of his word. Nevertheless, what experience has already verified, we must not uselessly continue to criticise. Criticism passes away, but faith abides. They part company only when criticism has finished its necessary work. True criticism has its place as a forerunner of a larger faith, making ready the way, the paths straight, and the rough places smooth, as John the Baptist did for Christ. Criticism having completed this noble though severe service, may say of faith: "It must increase; but I must decrease."

III. In the previous chapter it was said that the critical period in theological development is now abnormally lengthened because of education being to-day forefront in the general movement of progress. Another reason may be assigned for this undue lengthening. Critics have been criti-

cising the very means of progress, the tools necessary to their own work, namely, the standards of authority. This means that criticism is traveling in a circle. A philosophy has prevailed for some time which has led to a restatement of the subject of authority on a subjective basis. In keeping with this view the critic has imagined himself to be the standard of authority. He has, therefore, thrown away the pick and drill and begun to dig with his fingers in the mine of truth. In accepting this philosophy as the interpreter of the standards of authority, criticism has lost headway, and will soon find itself at a standstill. When there are as many standards as there are critics, a general advance is impossible. What is true to the individual critic only is invalid as criticism.

The idealistic philosophy above referred to has, by a merger, sought to monopolize the stock of all philosophy, science, and religion. Ever since the time of Kant, it has set men busy reducing all experience to the subjective basis. It tells us that all knowledge is from within. Even space and time are within us. In sensory experience, taking hearing as an example, there is no sound outside ourselves. It is our auditory nerves which make sound. In general, we create the world in which we live. Each man makes his own universe. He causes the earth to stand fast, the stars to gleam, and the sun to shine. He makes day and night. He even makes his god; or else has none. The Bible tells us how

God made man; idealism tells us how man makes God. Is not this but idolatry in a new dress? Is it not the paganism of manufactured deity? The heathen could have a god in common, but each idealist must have his own god, of his own making. Thus he outpagans the pagan.

This is not the place for an extended examination of this interesting philosophy, and of the various branches to which it is trunk and root. It combines truth with error. It contains the truth that there is an inherent subjectivity in all our knowledge and experience. That such is all subjective is far from true. Scarce a truth has been discovered by man that he has not proclaimed as all the truth. This happens in the case of the disciple of this philosophy, when he sets forth idealism as the whole truth of religion, of authority, and of experience in general. Remembering that Calvinism needs to be balanced by Arminianism for nearer approach to the full truth, may it not be that idealism needs to be balanced by realism to escape being cast into the ditch of error? Balance in thought, in moral character, and in life is at once the most difficult and the most precious of attainments. Let us give full credit to idealism for the truth it contains, while at the same time correcting some of its sweeping assumptions.

First, the fallacy of idealism lies in practically merging the subjective and the objective into one. All experience proceeds according to its essential

subject-object working principle. If the object is contained in the subject, or is merely the projection of the subjective, there is then really no objective; and where there is no real external objective, there is no real experience in relation to anything outside of ourselves. When a man thinks of space and time as within himself, and as having no objective existence, he thinks himself out of existence. Any process of experience which is wholly subjective is admittedly wholly illusion. That which is wholly objective is wholly non-existent, so far as experience is concerned.

It is true there is a certain amount of projection of the subjective into the objective. In all that we see, something of ourselves is seen. We know something of ourselves in all we know. The more complex and exalted the object, the greater the room for a subjective projection; and to reduce this projection to what is absolutely necessary, is one of the great ends of education. *It is also true that the objective is projected into the subjective.* Otherwise, knowledge and experience could never grow. The greater and more complex the subjective, the more the room for objective projection. Idealism tells us that we do not know things in themselves, the noumena. This is both true and untrue. If there were no identity, nothing in common between the subjective and the objective, this would be entirely true. In proportion as there is something in common between us and them, or be-

tween the subjective faculty and its objective, we do know things in themselves. For example, we occupy space, we are space; and can therefore know objective space. We are a part of what is a succession, a succession of varied orders; and can therefore know time. As long as we are body as well as soul, we shall know space. As long as there will be order and succession in this or the next world there will be time. This necessary mediation of something in common between the subjective and the objective in all phases of experience and knowledge, is one of the deepest and most revealing subjects of thought. Let no one object to the thought of a mediator in the realm of religion, for mediation is the necessity of all knowledge and of all experience. Our knowledge is not complete when this identity or mediation is impaired; but the knowledge that we have is true and real as far as it goes. What we see, we see. What we hear, we hear. What we know, we know. If this were not so, we could not even say with Hamlet: "I know a hawk from a handsaw."

III

RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY AND CRITICISM

RESURRECTION and the vision of the divinity of Jesus both originated and organized the Christian life. Critical probabilities and historic credibilities, valuations of documents, first century witness or second century testimony, are nowhere in the structure of Christian life. Life has an inspiration of its own, whatever it is, or however it originates, by which it lives. If there is no reality inspiring it, but only an illusion, it will blaze up and then die out. The Christian life had long ago died out if the divinity of Jesus had not been a genuine human perception and the resurrection a force of fact.

—*Rev. W. W. Peyton.*

CHAPTER THREE

RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY AND CRITICISM

THERE is no subject more vital to the thinking of to-day than that of religious authority. Much has been said and written that has tended to the confusion rather than to the conclusion of the whole matter. Many a pulpit is afloat in the waters of doubt, or is being swept out to sea by the retreating tidal wave of idealism.

Two great opposing schools of thought, the idealists and the realists, have given us their interpretations of the matter at issue. The former holds to the authority of the religious consciousness, or subjective authority. The latter defends what is called objective or external authority.

I. When it is on the one hand asserted, and on the other denied, that the religious consciousness is the seat of authority, it is clear that the science of consciousness, psychology, must arbitrate. According to this mediator, both are right and both are wrong. Subjective and objective authorities are pronounced to be halves of a truth, which, when divided, become inevitably contradictory, antagonistic factions. The psychological solution of this

problem is that both subjective and objective authorities are abstractions for discussion, neither of which is authority in reality. In describing authority, it may be necessary to discuss these phases separately; but in experience they are never so found.

The inseparable nature of the subjective and objective in consciousness and in all phases of experience, has been well set forth by many psychologists. When objective or external authority is not linked with its subjective, it does not become a reality of experience. Religion without experience is as impossible as matter without space. Authority is, therefore, not religious, except as it becomes experience. Wholly objective or external authority would be independent of subjective recognition and respect; and would, therefore, not be religious to the soul. *What there is in the objective is never realized except by means of its union with the subjective.* The only way objective authority can find its way into human experience, is according to this organic law of experience, its subject-object working principle. To become experiential, and religious, and real, authority must cease to be merely objective.

Subjective authority is as incomplete or impossible as objective. Some describe the subjective in authority as calling into existence its own objective, and think of its objective as thus contained in the subjective. This is a vain attempt to make them

mean one and the same thing. *When the faculty which recognizes authority is thought of as the authority which it recognizes*, our explanation of it has traveled in a circle. The eye does not see itself, it sees the light. It does not call into being the waves of ether, it records them. Sight is not light; the world is not in darkness when we shut our eyes. The optic nerve passes in the sensation of light, when the mind, through the eye, objectifies the light. True, the optic nerve when disturbed by a blow, may pass in the sensation of light, for this nerve can neither receive nor give any other sensation than that of light. The person then "sees stars," as we say. Are the stars thus seen a reality? No. They are a subjectivity like subjective authority. Seeing is a subjective-objective process; and as there is no objective in this case, nothing is seen. If the study of the science of astronomy were reduced to "seeing stars" in the way mentioned, we would have a parallel to the reducing of authority to the subjective plane.

Paul said, literally: "I strike my body in the eye, and bring it into subjection"; but subjective authority strikes the religious consciousness in the eye to give it liberty to make darkness seem light. When such is the light within the soul, how great is its darkness! If the lens of the eye is turned inward, sight is at an end, no matter how often the sensation of light is artificially produced. When the Christian consciousness turns in upon itself as its own au-

thority, both Christianity and authority are at an end. Religion is never any wider than the range of its authority; and the Christianity which begins and ends within a man, is no Christianity. To reduce religion and authority to a subjectivity is to stultify both.

The religious consciousness or "the truth-sense" cannot be in itself a standard of religion and of criticism. *It is but the subjective of a process which is inseparably subjective-objective.* Mere subjective standards put an end to all religion, criticism, and to science in general. The subjective of it ceases to bear all semblance to authority, when separated from its objective. In fact, it is then the denial of authority.

In proportion as there is a common objective, there is a common standard of authority. In the subjective there is some room for divergence; but withal there is a unity. Truth, like tears, is understood the world over, though both vary in subjective meaning. Man, and even brute, instinctively recognize authority. Concave implies the existence of convex. Subjective authority implies the existence of its counterpart, the objective; otherwise it has no meaning. As Joseph Cook has said, "God makes no half hinges."

Summing up this phase of the subject, we may say that the seat of religious authority is neither wholly within the soul, nor wholly outside it. Inside is found the faculty which recognizes, and, so

far, constitutes authority ; and without the things so recognized. Eyes without light would be no better than light without eyes. Seeing does not take place within the body, nor outside. It is the within and the without meeting. So the seat of sight, like the seat of religious authority, is found in a union of the internal and the external. What this union brings forth depends upon the natures of the subjective and objective. Experience is thus differentiated by means of the union of varying subjectives and objectives. The former may be any faculty or sense, or the soul as a whole, and the latter all else in existence to which we may be thus related. Love and hate, faith and unbelief, find their objective counterparts, and thus constitute a special experience in keeping with their natures. Authority is one kind of experience, and is of varied orders. The subjectives and objectives vary with the different kinds of authority. In the authority of Christian experience there are the inseparable two, the individual will recognizing and respecting a will higher than its own, and this will which is so recognized and respected. Putting in place of the two a wholly internal authority is like substituting a pot-hole for a river. Subjective authority could no more fill the place of all authority than a treadmill could do the work of a locomotive.

The expression, "the seat of authority," must be amended or become meaningless in the atmosphere which has been created by idealism. We have recog-

nized that this seat can be located neither in the objective nor in the subjective alone. Now, the phrase, "the seat of authority," is a poor one to express the union of the subjective and objective, the internal and the external. The figure of a "seat" does not fitly illustrate an organic union or a process of religious experience. Some such terms as "the working basis," "the experiential constitution," or "the organizing principle," might be used to set forth the living, experiential nature of religious authority.

II. The word "authority" is essentially a *relational* term. It expresses the fundamental quality of a certain relation. The social realm, in which authority is the relation expressed, must be understood in order that we may understand the nature of this fundamental quality. What State authority is, depends upon what a State is. What the authority of criticism is, depends upon what intellectual truth is. What religious authority is, depends upon what religion is.

Each realm possesses its own appropriate authority within it. When we pass outside of the family relation, the authority of the home is at an end, and city or State authority holds sway. The greater includes the less; State authority includes family authority; but the authority of the home is not valid in State matters. So, in experience, there are various realms, each with its own authority.

The smallest is the autonomous. As consciousness may take the form of self-consciousness, so religion may take the form of one's relation to himself. In this sphere we may have autonomous authority, which is not a subjectivity. The objective is, in this case, a reality. It is the religious self, and not the mere faculty which recognizes this self. All consciousness is not self-consciousness. All faith is not in self. All love is not self-love. All religion is not confined within the smaller sphere of a man's relation to himself. There is a narrow view of Christianity which confines our whole relation to him, to God within the soul; whereas God within is there to enable the soul to be related in a living way to God without. Religion is the government of God as well as self-management. Autonomous authority could no more cover the whole realm of religion than the authority of the home the entire realm of the State. When a man passes outside of his relation to himself alone, his autonomous authority is at once invalid, and therefore at an end. If autonomy were the only realm in Christianity, autonomous authority would have held exclusive sway in it. If there were only self-love, there would be no true love. If there were only faith in self, there would be no true faith. If there were only autonomous authority, there would be no true authority.

Authority is the regulative and directive element of a personal relationship within some sphere. To

understand the authority of the Christian realm, one must understand Christianity itself. *It is personal relationship with God in Christ.* The possibility of divine authority is the possibility of divine relationship. To deny the one is to deny the other; yea, even the divine existence. To deny the possibility of God's relation of authority is logically to deny the possibility of all divine relation and existence. God must be God. His right it is to rule. The orderliness and progress of the universe mirror the place and necessity of the divine authority. Humanity will eternally need the rule of divinity. The quality of God's relation is determined by the measure of likeness to himself in that to which he is related. His authority over man in the full meaning of this term, is made possible by man's likeness to himself. Divine authority over inanimate nature has much less meaning. Because of their likeness, God and man can enter each other's experience in this relation. It is often assumed that only the imperfect need the rule of God; whereas all moral imperfection arises out of disobedience to God. The perfect Son of God had incomparable regard for the rule of the Father in his own life and elsewhere. The more perfect the nature of man, the more the rule of God is sought after and enjoyed.

I worship thee, sweet will of God,
And all thy ways adore;
And every day I live,
I seem to love thee more and more.

It will be remembered that in the discussion of idealism a necessary mediation between the subjective and the objective in experience was mentioned. In Christian authority there must be something in common in the subjective and objective which is in keeping with the nature of this realm. *This is the constituent element of authority.* The concrete Christianity of experience being right personal relationship with God, we inquire for the central thing in personality that we may hit upon the dominant element in personal relationship and the essential element in religious authority. *It is the will.* This substance in common in the subjective and objective constitutes or organizes religious authority. Christian authority is at heart not a matter of mind, but of will. Of course the will is accompanied and served by the mind in the outworking of authority. As only love can know and respond to love, so will alone can recognize will and obey it. Where there is no human and divine will in relation to each other, there is no religious authority in the full sense of the term. If God had no will concerning man, and man had no will concerning God's will, religious authority would be impossible.

The value of any statement of the nature of religious authority may be estimated by the help it offers to the religious life. There have been statements of this matter put forth within our own time that, on the confession of their authors, did not give them rest or peace; and what they could

not do for their authors, they could not do for any one else. When God's authority is shut in by subjectivity or shut out by objectivity, his will, which alone can bring peace to the soul, is made impracticable. Taking the point of view of full Christian experience, we may escape the tangle which results from having the fractional authority of the mind and its abstractions treated as though it were the whole authority of the soul, of the full religious life, and of the entire realm of God and Christianity. The final test of any theory of religious authority will be its coincidence with the facts of normal Christian experience, and its ministry thereto.

III. While will is the constituent element in authority, *there are three operative elements, the executive, the power, and the law.* In the authority of Christianity Christ is the executive of the divine will, the Holy Spirit, the power, and the word of God the law. The character of the outgoing life of God in Christ, and the nature of the Saviour's work in bringing man into normal relation to the Father, constitute Christ the executive of the divine authority. Who Christ is, the nature of his work for us, and his relation to us and to the Father, establish his place in the authority of God. Acceptance of his lordship is, therefore, essential to Christianity. We speak of Jesus as the fullest expression of the love of God. He could not be this if he were not at the same time the fullest expres-

sion of the will of God. Love without will is empty and invertebrate. He is the supreme exponent of divine will: he lived the divine authority. He did not assume this authority; he was it. He spake "as one having authority"; but his consciousness, thought, feeling, will, every act, entire personality, and whole life were innately expressive of divine authority in being rather than in permissive possession.

By the nature of his person and place, he was fitted to make the divine authority a reality in human experience. When he is received, the power of all divine reality comes into human life. By recognition of the authority of the Father in the Son, the foundation is laid for its upbuilding in Christian life. The wider the range of human powers, and the more intense their activity, the fuller may be the experience of the Lord's authority. *This is the outworking of the lordship of Christ over his own.* As large as are the vast relations of the kingdom of God, with Christ as its executive head; as wide as are the universal relations of God in Christ—so great is the realm of the Lord's rulership. "He is the King of Glory, the Lord strong and mighty"; and "he must reign till he hath put his enemies under his feet."

Authority in any realm without the appropriate power of that realm to accompany it will prove ineffective. Asserted authority without supporting power becomes a laughingstock. Calling in the aid

of power within another realm confesses usurpation. The unrepented crime of the Roman, Greek, and other Churches is that of using civil power to support spiritual authority. This publishes the lack of spiritual power, and increases rather than cures the decay which causes it. Authority must prove its divine source by using the power of its own realm, according to the law of God in that realm.

The authority of Christ is within the spiritual realm. He refused the help of sword and of worldly kingdom. *He needed them not.* The power behind the authority of Jesus Christ is that of the Holy Spirit. He ever had in his authority the full support of the Spirit of God, as he still has in all matters. The Spirit is the person of the Trinity adapted by nature and office to bring to bear upon human personality the personal power of God. Empowering by his indwelling and enforcing in his transcendence, he establishes and supports the authority of Christ by the personal energy of God. The Spirit is the power of God, working subjectively and objectively in the experience of divine authority.

As Jesus is the great executive of the divine authority, so the word of God is the great legislative embodiment of the divine will. When he saves the soul, God writes his law on the human heart. This is not law complete in itself. Having done this, God is surely able to perform its counterpart miracle, namely, to write its objective complement in a book.

“The light of the body is the eye”; but this is not light without external light, and needs the objective light of the sun. So does the law in the soul need the law in the Book. The written word is parallel to, and the servant of, the Living Word, Jesus Christ. Both combine human and divine elements. It is the deity of Christ which gives value to his humanity, rather than his humanity which gives value to his deity. It is the Christ who gives value to the Bible, rather than the Bible which gives value to the Christ. His humanity enables the white light of his deity to shine through it as a veil, blessing instead of blinding. In the Scriptures the human element is the vehicle of the divine in making known the thought, and will, and law of the Infinite.

The Bible is the law of life in God. The worth of the Scriptures lies in their service to the lordship of Christ, who alone can give this life in God. The word of God is the great objectification of the will of God. What the Christ commands, the laws of salvation and of service, the rules of divine love and fellowship, the regulations of human relations in order that men live as the family of God, are all to be found in The Great Book. There they take the form which makes them translatable into human experience and constructive in the Christian life. The Scriptures direct, sustain, and satisfy the soul. They are the divine substance in food-form. They are the supreme written authority on what agrees with the soul, on what pleases God, and on the basis of his

judgments. The love letter of the mother to her absent son is an authority to him at least in the realm of his relation to her. The Bible is the love letter of the divine Father to his children. It is his law of love and his love of law. It is the power of God because the word of God. Its authority is not based finally on the intellectual truth which it contains, but on its moral and spiritual truth, which serves the personal, living truth, as it is in Jesus. Through the centuries the life springing from him, the Christian life wherever found, has, according to the law of affinity, recognized and accepted the authority of The Book, which also came from God. The Book of life is naturally an authority to "the life that is life indeed." Finally, it is the authority on Christ's authority: "It is the power of God unto salvation"; and the law of God unto edification.

IV. The criticism of Christian authority may be desirable, but the religious nature of this authority makes it necessary that our criticism be broad enough to admit the wide range of religious facts to be examined. As religious authority must be spiritual and experiential, the criticism of it must also be spiritual and experiential. Only the soul can fully enter into the things of the soul. Even the authority of the Bible in the Christian life cannot be pronounced upon adequately by intellectual criticism. From the very nature of its abstract standard of authority, namely, intellectual truth,

this similar order of criticism can, at the most, but pronounce upon the intellectual truth of Scripture statements. In experience light breaks out of the Bible; but light also breaks in upon the word. It is in the full light of Christian experience that we must judge its light.

The abstract standard of intellectual criticism leads back, of course, to the mind of God as the concrete authority with which the Christian mind has to do. Defining this realm of criticism, we may say: *Intellectual truth is the correspondence between thought and thing, the intellectual correlate to existence, and the norm of reality in thought and thought-relations.*

It will be seen at once that the mind of God alone is absolute authority in this realm. His mind alone can objectify it all. He alone can comprehend all the reality, relations, and correspondences of intellectual truth. Men become secondary authorities in proportion as their apprehension of intellectual truth becomes fuller. A new meaning is thus given to authority, namely, that of *relative superiority of amount of knowledge possessed*. Even in a small field of critical investigation, so many truths cluster, and so intricate is the network of their relations, the most learned are the most modest in claiming this authority.

In the field of biblical criticism, for example, a scholar acquaints himself with all available knowledge, or with a goodly portion of it; and he is

then accounted an authority by those who have put the most of their time elsewhere. He is not an authority outside of his special realm. Since he is not a final authority, he must not be excused from relating the facts upon which he bases his conclusions. Others also have the logical faculty as well as he; and they too may draw inferences. We have to be particular about this, for the conclusions of specialists are often based partly on their facts and largely upon their theories.

Truth may be said to be authority to the religious mind; but truth is an abstraction; and abstractions have no place in experience. We never know the abstraction whiteness, we know something that is white. The real authority of the Christian mind is not truth, but something that is true. Truth in the mind recognizes truth beyond, which it objectifies as its Bible, the revealed concrete truth of God. When God is in the mind, it cannot fail to recognize God in his own thought, and to link itself thereto. His mind indwelling in the human mind unites with his own mind and thought outside; and constitutes the authority of this realm. That is not God in the mind which sets it against the thought of God; just as that is not God in the soul which sets it against the divine will. *The presence or absence of God in the mind is made manifest by the character of its objective affinity in authority.*

The critical faculty, having come to the full development of its power, is not to be looked upon as

thereafter of no use and really an enemy. If, however, in the pride of its strength it is used as an end and not as a means to a higher end, it will be an enemy. This is true of any power which we possess. The power of judging reality is constantly needed in the Christian life. All our days we must "try the spirits." We may do this effectually only as our standard, "the Spirit of Christ," remains unquestioned. If, instead, we turn back to criticize our criterion in Christ, the spirits are trying us. In spiritual life, when we are not pushing the enemy, the enemy is pushing us. There is an order of criticism that spells retreat. Lot's wife looked back; but it turns back. No one can win a victory while his back is toward the enemy. We cannot have "the sword of truth" in the crucible and in the battle at the same time. Debaters will not do in place of sharpshooters when the enemy is upon us. There is a region where criticism must cease, or advance in religious life and service becomes impossible. Criticizing the tools of progress instead of using them, makes progress out of the question. Halting the march of the world's conquest in order to debate with herself the rights of her Lord's leadership and the authority of his word, the church of Christ at once becomes a mutinous mob of critics, in place of a victorious army.

The son, brought up at the cost of a widowed mother's toil and self-sacrifice, will not find it necessary to reexamine each day the foundation of

his faith in her. Should the time come that faith in others will fail, his mother remains a concrete standard of goodness, not at all affected by the ruin of faith, the chaos of confidence elsewhere. Knowing what Christ, as Saviour, has done for us, and how the bread of his word has satisfied us, it is neither necessary nor wise to put each day the authority of both into the crucible of critical investigation. Advance and growth in any realm are rendered utterly impossible by a perpetual returning to the beginning. As the writer of the book of Hebrews says:

“Wherefore, leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ (the word of the beginning of Christ) let us press on unto perfection; not laying again a foundation of . . . faith toward God.”

To continue doing what this forbids, we are further told, will be to recrucify Christ, and to fall away in such a way as to leave no possibility of repentance, and therefore no possibility of progress. Even for intellectual criticism there is no true advance beyond that which serves in saving this world and in building up the kingdom of God. For unbelief in the Living Truth, veiled as criticism in search of truth, there can be no progress, because to it there can be no revelation of saving truth, and consequently no basal verification of its allied truths.

But what is truth? 'T was Pilate's question put
To Truth itself, that deign'd him no reply.

IV

POSITIVE THEOLOGY AND THE
ATONEMENT

Star unto star speaks light, and world to world
Repeats the passage of the universe
To God; the name of Christ—the one great word
Well worth all languages in earth or heaven.

—*Philip James Bailey.*

THEOLOGY, if it is to be of any real use to the preacher, must be modernized. . . In a word, if theology is to be modernized, it must be by its own gospel. . . It is the gospel of Jesus, the eternal Son of God. It sets Christ's person in the center of theology no less than of religion. If the nineteenth century had done no more than restore the person of Christ to the center of theology, it would have done a very great theological work.

—*Rev. P. T. Forsyth, D. D.*

CHAPTER FOUR

POSITIVE THEOLOGY AND THE ATONEMENT

A POSITIVE theology is the need of the hour; but it is also the need of every hour. The critical spirit should constantly be giving place to the constructive. We have had enough digging down; the time has come for more building up. All purely critical work need not be abandoned; but a far larger amount of Christian energy might be profitably withdrawn to higher ends. According to the cycle-law of progress, a revulsion toward the present over-abundance of critical thought, must soon manifest itself.

We begin to hear much of the pragmatist. It is a hopeful sign. He is the realist who looks for spiritual results; he is practical as opposed to speculative. The pragmatist views idealism in the light of its output in work. Jesus taught pragmatic theology when he said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." The practical must, however, grow out of the ideal, if it is to prove of value. Positive theology combines the good and worthy elements in both idealism and pragmatism.

I. The term "positive" is in the present day associated with the pragmatism of pantheistic ideal-

ism. In the past it was used by Comte, whose philosophic method, rather than philosophy, set forth an evolution, first out of the theological into the metaphysical, then out of the latter into the positive, by which he meant scientific or sense-knowledge. This was really a devolution; and Comte himself returned to the first stage in latterly attempting to construct a religion. The term "positive" deserves to be rescued from both of these associations.

Pantheistic pragmatism never has been, and never can be, a positive force in religion. It is really an attempt to intellectualize religion; and in the case of Christianity, it would substitute a philosophy for the gospel. It is negative where religion must be positive, namely, in appeal to the heart. As to Comte's system, it may be said that the positive is not confined to the realm of physical sense. As a matter of fact, every realm has its positive element, and the higher the realm the higher the order of positivity within it. The positive of one realm cannot be substituted for the positive of another, for then the two would coalesce. The positive of the mind cannot serve as the positive of the heart. The positive of a part of the Christian life will not do for the positive of the whole. The positive in Christianity is not fractionally so.

In order to test its claim thereto, when a truth is emphasized as positive, notice what other truths are thereby rendered negative. Does it call other truths into activity and adjustment while obscuring none

that deserves to shine? For example, emphasize the divine immanence as the positive of all Christian truth, and we find that it buries out of sight the equally important truths of the divine transcendence and personality. In the same way give the positive place to any of the intellectual truths of Christianity, and truths of its heart seem to shrivel. Emphasize as preeminent any truth of Christian feeling, and truths of mind and of morals are thereby eclipsed. What, then, is the truth which, in being accepted as positive in Christianity, does not render its other valuable and essential truths negative? It is the truth which relates, organizes, and enlivens them all; it is the truth of personality, of a person who grips our entire being and relates together in life the truth of every part by means of the truth that he himself is in God.

Positive theology is experiential. What, we may here inquire, is foundationally positive to Christian experience? Faith, in the order of time, is the primal positive factor of all experience, and determines its character. Experience is higher in its order, the higher the character of the faith that begets it. The personal is the highest realm of faith; and the highest order of faith is that which is placed in a person. The highest faith is in the highest person. The constitutional faith of religion is in the personal God; and the faith which begets Christianity is in the personal Christ. As faith is spiritual, it is therefore the positivity of the spiritual

which lies at the foundation of religion, and also underlies empirical or sense-knowledge. In fact, it is the beginning of all knowledge and experience.

In Christian experience, faith may be first in the order of time; but in importance love is first. Love is unquestionably the strongest positive factor in religion and in life. Christian love is the subjective positivity within the soul, and the personal Christ is its objective positivity. No one in the world of religion has awakened love of so rich and exalted character, so potent for spiritual good, as has Jesus Christ. When the Lord of life has won his way to the place of love supreme, all other loves and interests, and all thought are organized into happy subservience. The Christian theologian is positive in his theology in proportion as his head is ruled by his heart in love for Jesus Christ.

The thought that grows not old is the thought of love. Man's thought about redeeming love may pass away; but this love abides. Positive theology is the love-thought of God and man interwoven as warp and woof. Its patterns vary, but its fabric is everywhere shot through with the golden thread of redemption, and with the scarlet thread of evangelism. Love responds to love, as mind to mind. The iridescent spring of Christian love issues forth in an ever-widening river of service, which in sparkling current flows gladly down the glades of human needs, singing its way to the infinite ocean of love divine whence at first it came.

The theology which grows out of devotedness to a person, is positive in sentiment and thought as related to that person. Positive theology has sentiment as an essential element; but it is not a sentimentalism devoid of thought and reason. It is thought and reason at their best and in the highest service. Let us not decry sentiment. A soldier's patriotism and a mother's love are sentiment. Theology, without sentiment, is petrified. It is then as a human body without nerves. Were it all sentiment it would be as a body all nerves—a mere jelly.

Sentiment does not weaken theology: it strengthens it. Sentiment does not mar nor mystify, it beautifies and clarifies. Under the pressure of its power theology crystallizes. It imparts the beauty of clarity and the power of perspicuity. It is the outcome of the balancing and blending of religious thought and feeling: it results from wedding the Christian heart to the Christian brain. These two that God hath thus joined together, let not man put asunder. Henceforth they live and serve as one. Positive theology, the child of this royal wedding, is heir of universal popularity and will therefore reign one day as queen of the intellectual realm and empress of the sciences.

Positive theology is the truth about God in orderly arrangement adapted to express the normal appreciation of human thought and feeling in response to the divine love and sacrifice: it is the re-

lating of all lower forms of religious truth to Him who is the preeminent, personal truth. It is for service rather than for speculation, for the soul rather than for science, and for the individual rather than for the intellectual fraction of himself. Its point of view is that of a sinner saved by Jesus Christ and responding to him in thought, feeling, and will. The feeling expressed by it is as important as its thought, for the moral and religious results of feeling are greater than those of thought. More thought arises from feeling than feeling from thought. Whatever their relative values as sources of theology, both are needed. Neither alone is sufficient. Positive theology must express both thought and feeling, but mere thought and feeling saves no one. When not moved by the thought and feeling of Christ, theology invariably tends to become negative and empty.

The term "positive" is relative, and has therefore various shades of meaning, according to the nature of that to which it is related. Positive theology is practical; it is positive in service to the Christ and the kingdom. *The greatest positivity possible is that of helpfulness in the great struggle of God and man with sin.* The contest of the ages is with iniquity. Christian theology must therefore be positive in saving truth. The gospel of the Son of God belongs to this order, because it is the story of the redeeming love of God. Any truths, however valuable and positive in other realms, which

are made to discredit and displace this gospel, are negative in theology and most traitorous in the divine war with sin.

Positive theology blots out the distinction between theology and religion, for it is the theology of practical Christianity. It is the working knowledge of the servant of Christ. Systematic theology is like the science of mathematics; positive theology is like the working knowledge of an engineer. There is a profound difference between the theoretical and the practical. Positive theology is theology applied; it is positive in relation to the work of extending and building up the kingdom of God. It is not so much the theology about the Christian life as the theology of that life; not so much the theology about Christian service as the theology of that service.

II. How comes it that Jesus Christ is the dominant subject of positive theology, and his atonement its central doctrine? These questions may be answered in turn. Who Jesus Christ is and what he has done for us, are one thing; and the faith and love which give him his place and make his work in us possible are another. Faith in and love for him define the heart of a living Christianity. These primal forces of Christian life must be explained if we are to understand the life and theology growing out of them. They ultimately bring to the surface the organizing idea of Christianity, the atonement, even

as they suggest the organizing personality of Christianity, the Christ. They point to a relationship, grounded in the truth of what he does in meeting spiritual needs. This personal relationship to Christ must be rooted in life's deepest need, justified by the highest service, and revealed in fullest by a resultant life. This vital relation is, in fact, a theological revelation in itself.

The relation of the believer to Christ finds explanation in the working principle of Christian salvation. The center of Christianity is not a doctrine, but a person; and the working principle of the salvation which it offers, is adjustment to that person. Christ is not a creed; he is a living Redeemer. He becomes our Saviour, not by accepting what he says about God, but by accepting him as the way to God; not by receiving his code of ethics, but by treating him as the power that makes for personal righteousness; not by believing statements about him, but by believing him; and not by attempting to do the works which he did, but by making it possible for him to do in us the works which he can. He taught this when he said: "This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom God hath sent."

The working principle of salvation is exercising faith in the living Lord. Jesus said repeatedly that faith in himself is indispensable to salvation. Faith without personal relationship is but a barren intellectuality. *The irreducible minimum in the means of salvation is the personal relationship of*

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faith in the risen Saviour. The most subtle heresy is that which teaches that salvation may be obtained by Christ's sayings only. The teachings of the Lord, apart from the living Lord himself, are sure to be misinterpreted and become a dead letter in the matter of salvation. They are misinterpreted, when they are made to teach that anything other than faith in Christ, is sufficient to save. Being social in its nature, the human soul can be saved only by a social relationship. Without living contact by means of the reciprocity of personal faith in and with the Christ, he cannot give life. Eternal life is life in Christ, a permanent life-relationship with the Eternal, a becoming through the Son an integral part of the everlasting life of God.

Again, devotion to the Lord arises from the reality of his response to the man's spiritual needs, and from the completeness of human satisfaction resulting from his salvation. This actuality of devotedness has back of it a reality of experience. It is the established conviction and certainty of Christian experience that Jesus Christ fills the measureless void of the soul's need, and that reaching into the lowest depths of its nature he quickens all with the wondrous vitality within himself. This satisfaction deepens as life proceeds; and the vaster revelation of Christ's helpfulness in all the problems, perplexities, relations, and tasks of life, is then given room to shine forth. As Christian experience is increased in intensity through service to the kingdom, love

for Christ becomes the stronger and fuller, and knowledge of him the broader and more positive.

III. Intense Christian experience tends to produce virile statements of its facts. The strength of heart beat is recorded in the force of pulse-throbs. The more intense and positive the religious experience, the stronger will be the expression of its central thought, its organizing idea. The organic truth of Christian life cannot fail to be expressed in one way and another by that life. Coming back to the story of the Gospels, one finds at the heart of them and of the New Testament as a whole, the same theme which has occupied the central place in all evangelism ever since, viz., "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

The theology of Christian experience, with Christ's redemption as its organizing idea, would not long remain positive, if it had not the power to originate that experience, or were not used to that end. John said: "And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." The positive in religious life is the practical. There is no faith in Christ without obedience to him. *Bearing witness to the Christ to the end of the growth of his kingdom, is a primary command.* The life imparted by him must thus express itself or perish. This compels our effort to state in some form what the Lord is to us because of what he has done for us. A working theology infallibly clusters

its thought about the redemptive work of Christ. This sacrifice is intuitively accorded the place of utmost significance. The mark of healthy spiritual life and effectiveness in evangelism is the stability of the person and cross of Christ as a center. Progress in theology and increase in its power of service are marked by higher, clearer, and more practical appreciation of Christ's atonement. He who is educated into giving Christ and his death a diminished emphasis is a graduate in unfitness to reach the lost. This is well illustrated in an incident related not long ago in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, N. Y., by "Gipsy" Smith:

The late Charles A. Berry, of Wolverhampton, England, was a great friend of mine. Jowett, of Birmingham, told me once, on a train while traveling to Oxford, this story: "Gipsy, I have a story to tell you, a beautiful story from Berry's own lips. He sat in his study in Bolton, Lancashire, late one night, when every one else had gone to bed; and there came a knock at his door. When he opened it, there stood a typical Lancashire girl with her shawl over her head and clogs on her feet. 'Are you the minister?' she asked. 'Yes.' 'Then I want you to come and get my mother in.' Berry, thinking it was some drunken brawl, said, 'You must get a policeman.' 'Oh, no!' said the girl, 'my mother is dying, and I want you to get her into salvation.' . .

"The girl was determined, and I had to go. I found the place was a house of ill fame. In the lower rooms they were drinking and telling lewd stories; and upstairs I found the poor woman dying. I sat down and talked about Jesus as the beautiful example; and extolled him as

leader and teacher. She looked at me out of her eyes of death and said, 'Mister, that's no good for the likes of me. I don't want an example, I'm a sinner.' And Berry said to me, 'Jowett, there I was, face to face with a poor soul dying, and had nothing to tell her. I had no gospel, and I thought of what my mother had taught me; and I told her the old story of God's love in Christ dying for sinful men, whether I believed it or not.' 'Now you're getting at it,' said the woman. 'That's what I want. That's the story for me.' And Berry turned to Jowett and said, 'I got her in; and I got in myself.'"¹

Sin is still the same; human nature is the same; and Christ is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." What has worked in saving the lost, must therefore still work. The Holy Spirit has ever blessed the message of Christ's redemption. Christian experience cannot displace its organizing idea and remain Christian. Paul says: "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."²

A positive, or working theology, must of necessity commend itself both to God and man. One could challenge the world to produce an instance of the Holy Spirit being poured out in revival blessing on any other than the "Message of Redemption by the Cross." It has been well said that the Welsh Revival would have been an impossibility without the Welsh appreciation of the atonement. Whatever theories may be held concerning it, whatever

¹ This incident is referred to by Rev. James Drummond in his "Memoir of Charles A. Berry, D. D.," p. 35.

² 2 Cor. 15 : 3.

the angle of vision from which men may view it, in Christian work there is but one place for it—the center of doctrine even as Christ is the center of personal relationship in Christian life.

IV. Since it is the redemptive or atoning work of Christ which is the central, organizing idea of positive theology, the best statement of it possible is justly demanded. A description leading to a one-sided appreciation of it, is the very thing to be avoided. If ever one should pray for deliverance, it is when presenting a statement of the atonement that he be saved from projecting his mental and spiritual limitations into it, as though they belonged there. The prayer, however, cannot be fully answered.

Invariably we project much of ourselves into all we see. The higher and more complex the object of study, the greater the room for subjective projection. The very best that can be done is to provide that the projection agree in kind and spirit with that which we study. If the personal projection agrees with the object of study, there will still be limitation, but not that of unfitness, confusion, and distortion. For every study there are the prerequisites of disposition and capacity. Every investigation calls for specific power and sympathy. Without these there is utter unfitness to proceed. The cuttlefish ejects its inky sepia into the water: that is its protection. An alien mood projects its colored sepia: that is its misfortune. The greater the subject of study, the

more fatally is one incapacitated for it by absence of the power of appreciation and lack of sympathetic disposition.

To the inartistic, or to the color-blind, Rubens' "Descent from the Cross" is a confusion of paint and a waste of canvas. The atonement is God's masterpiece. To the soul without responsive devotedness to Jesus Christ it is a jumble of uninteresting mystery. Love to God must ever therefore lead the way in exploring the massive mountain range of divine sacrifice. The topmost peak of all is Mount Calvary. Measuring the heights, and depths, and breadths, and lengths of Christ's atonement, we must ever use the theodolite of love rather than the microscope of criticism.

When love is the subject, but not the experience of a writer, he encloses vacuity with a fence of words. There have been descriptions of the atonement to the same effect. Superficial feeling and profound thinking do not keep company. It is not that the theologian may have too much head; rather, he may have too little heart to appreciate the atonement. That which is God's sacrifice to make man whole, needs the whole man to appreciate it. In the rounding out of spiritual development is attained the symmetry of personality which may exercise full power of appreciation.

No doctrine of our faith calls for more thought and heart and soul than the atonement. Only as men have emerged from the swamps of selfishness

and climbed the steeps of personal sacrifice for the kingdom of God, can they have commanding view of this divine sacrifice. It costs growth in faith to study faith; it costs training in sacrifice to understand sacrifice. For example, the mind and soul of Paul were developed and ripened by service, suffering, and sacrifice for his Lord. When, therefore, he turned his eyes to the scene of sin's tragedy, humanity's hope, and redemption's reality, he could utter these humble, yet sublime words: "Far be it from me to glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time:
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.

V

THEORIES OF THE ATONEMENT

THESE illustrations of the nature and effect of the Death of Christ are illustrations, and nothing more. They are analogous to the transcendent fact only at single points. The fact is absolutely unique. The problem before us is to form some conception of the Death of Christ which shall naturally account for all these various representations of it; and no solution of the problem is to be found by attempting to translate these representations, derived from transient human institutions and from the mutual relations of men, into the Divine and eternal sphere to which this great Mystery belongs. . . The descriptions of the Death of Christ in the New Testament, as a Sacrifice, a Propitiation, a Ransom, are of infinite practical value; but we misapprehend the true principles and methods and aims of theological science if we make these descriptions the basis of a theory of the Atonement. They constitute the authoritative tests of the accuracy of a theory. A theory is false if it does not account for and explain these descriptions. But to construct a theory we must put these descriptions aside, and consider the Death of Christ itself, in its real relations to God and man.

—*Rev. R. W. Dale, D. D., LL. D.*

CHAPTER FIVE

THEORIES OF THE ATONEMENT

IN exploring the vast continents of Christian thought, let us not forget the islands of the sea, both great and small. The great world of theology includes the archipelago of the theories of the atonement. These theories are attempts to state the greatest fact that has ever confronted the human mind; they endeavor to explain the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Unconsciously, we may take unfitting attitude toward the Lord himself in our treatment of these theories. It may be that inasmuch as we despise one of the least of them, we despise him. One purpose of this chapter will be to give honor to the theories of the atonement, according to the scale of their worth for positive theology.

I. The intellectual phase of these theories of the atonement is not the only one to be considered. They have deep ethical significance and substance. That they have had a religious value is a matter of history. They have filled a large place, not only in Christian thought, but also in spiritual life. In them the religious thinking of succeeding generations was concentrated.

If we are to get the setting of these theories, we must take into account the motives which lay back of them, the circumstances in which they were produced, and the thought-currents which moved in their times. In themselves, these theories could not have occupied the place and rendered the service which they did had they been devoid of ethical truth. Christian life is too profoundly spiritual to give central place to anything without moral content.

The differences between the theories are not to be regarded as evidence that they contradict each other, any more than differences among men are to be regarded as contradictions of humanity. The theories are divergences in the truth, not from it. Theories of the atonement differ more in color and pattern than in warp and woof. They all express phases of the truth: "Ye are complete in him." Modern theories cannot improve on this, except as they state this truth in a way which will more readily interpret it to the mind and heart of to-day. What counts is not so much the temporary form which the truth takes, as the reality and beauty of its vital principle. Let us remember that the saving efficacy of the atonement was experienced in bygone days as fully as now, and that the older theories rendered in their day as great service as have the later theories in the present time.

Theories of the atonement were of service in cultivating personal relationship with Christ, and

in facilitating an intellectual grasp of the meaning of his great redemptive sacrifice. They assisted the Christian in appropriating the riches of his inheritance. They increased the hold of Christ upon human minds and hearts, and enabled him to link lives in closer union in him and with him. They gave expression to human appreciation of the divine means of salvation, formed a nucleus for Christian thought, and became the substance of preaching and of pragmatic theology. They expressed to each period the thought for which it was ripe. They mediated the truth for which each stage of theological progress called.

The worthiest appreciation of the theories will be the most practical, for they are a sacred trust and challenge. They demand that we continue the work of theological development. Accumulation, co-ordination, and acceleration define the law of progress. Each generation is called of God to advance. Each age has its own task before it; but it is a labor related to what has already been done. The work of the ages is one. God's plans are not desultory. Tennyson said:

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of
the suns.¹

The height of present-day achievement could not have been reached had not preceding gener-

¹ "Locksley Hall," stanza, 69.

ations toiled up the steep ascent. Let us not count it a special merit on our part that we were born higher up. Rather, let us think of it as entailing greater responsibility. We must not look down with disdain upon the slow and weary steps upward by which humanity reached the plane where we began. It will be but a little time until another generation will be looking down upon the ground now occupied by us. When they do so, may they see on our part such an appreciation of preceding thought as we would wish posterity to have for ours.

Any generation is fatally unfitted to make the advance which it should when it has a penchant for heaping ridicule upon the work of predecessors. When appreciation of its past moves downward, there is small hope of theology moving upward. The conceit that our thought is bound in any case to be better than all before it, should be reminded of another thing that Tennyson said:

Evolution ever climbing after some ideal good,
And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the mud."²

Due respect for the past does not mean that we must blindly adopt all former theories; shut our eyes to all their limitations, and in lazy content sit down with them the rest of our lives. The best appreciation of them will be to produce new and better statements. In the spiral ascent in which

² "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After," stanza 100.

progress usually moves, we may find ourselves near the ground occupied by others centuries ago, only that we are directly above that ground. The same truth, which others held years ago, may be held by us also, but in higher relation. For example, the institutional or personal statement of the atonement resembles the substitutional, except that its point of view is higher. Truth in the ultimate is personal. The personal form gives place and value to all other forms. The world is now ripe and ready for presentations of the atonement from the personal standpoint. A theory of the atonement centered in Him who is the atonement has the advantage of making possible the adjusting of all the preceding theories in its central, mediating truth—
THE LIVING ATONEMENT.

II. Theories of the atonement have set forth different phases of the righting of sin's wrong by the sacrifice of Christ. There is no need of a historical review of them, for that work has been already done, and in some cases most exhaustively. These reviews are not all as valuable as they might have been. The writers have, in many instances, lacked sympathy with their subject and oftentimes have been too controversial. Imagining that all the truth of the atonement could be corralled into the single statement of his own theory, its author proceeded to show that all other theories must have included, in the main, misapprehensions.

The task of building up a theory has, even in the best of men, the tendency to blind them to the worth of other theories. A mother can see most beauty and promise in her boy; and the theorist finds no offspring so fair and well formed as the child of his mind. All other theories seem mechanical to the man who has a theory of his own.³

Some of the phases of this subject set forth by theories of the atonement are as follows: Righting by the ransom of Christ the wrong of man's captivity through sin; righting the wrong to God; to his honor and majesty; to his governmental authority; to his law; to his justice; to his holiness; and to his ethical nature in general. A number of theories deal primarily with the means or method of the atonement, rather than with its end. Some of these are the substitutionary, penitential, obedience-death, judgment-death, moral influence, and the "subjective" theories in general. There is a good deal of overlapping and intermingling of ideas in all these statements; but each according to the ruling ethical or religious ideas of the day, expressed appreciation of Christ's work of redemption. The ascendance of any theory could not be permanent. Christian life and thought are in constant motion; and the general

³ It might be well to show that this rule still holds true. Doctor Mabie, in "The Meaning and Message of the Cross," p. 195, says, "I confess at this point, I think Doctor Denny's recent statement of the substitutionary principle of the cross is inadequate. It is too mechanical." Most men would say that Doctor Mabie's "Judgment-death" theory is the more mechanical of the two. It is fair to say that in his more recent statement, "How Does the Death of Christ Save Us?" Doctor Mabie gives in the "Vicario-vital" theory an excellent experiential presentation.

ethical advance has ever suggested the incompleteness of former theories and the need of the new; and in turn the incompleteness of the latter has suggested the need of still others. Each theory, in trying to keep up with this advance, tended to overdevelopment. As there is no grace of character which does not become a vice when unrestrained by a counter development of other and balancing graces, so there is no truth or theory which does not, by undue emphasis and overdevelopment, become false, and accumulate by accretion the unworthy and absurd.

In the early days of Christianity no theory of the atonement was propounded; but the first which did appear well illustrates the matter referred to. The wrong of man's spiritual captivity, and his emancipation by Christ, are unalloyed truths. Our Lord spoke of his life given as "a ransom." Paul too wrote of him "who gave himself a ransom for all." He also said, "Ye are bought with a price." In the first theory it was the figure of the ransom rather than the truth of spiritual deliverance which was developed. It is always a perilous thing to develop a figure of speech. A wise man said, "Obedience to law is the price of liberty." If we develop this figure of the price, and in making it go on all fours, endeavor to find some one to whom it is paid—the jailers of the country, mayhap—the ridiculous is then added to the sublime, and the true saying brought into dis-

repute. When the first theory took the enlarged form which represented the ransom as paid to Satan, who was baited by the blood of Christ, cheated, and paid in his own coin, the truth of spiritual emancipation was buried under a landslide of absurdity.

The number and variety of the theories make plain that the many directions in which sin's wrong has moved are becoming more and more fully apprehended. Any theory which presents sin's wrong as being righted in one direction only, may be a halting-place overnight; it cannot be a dwelling-place for the human mind. For this reason the moral-influence theory is not a final statement of the atonement. That the death of Christ exhibits God's love with reconciling influence upon man is indisputable truth. That the Christ was subjected to the terrible torture and death agony of the cross solely for exhibition purposes, and that the wrong of sin could be fully met in that way, is indubitable error. Such an exhibition must be either a by-product, or a crime that in itself needs atonement.

So much for one of the first and one of the later theories. There is a statement of the atonement current to-day which practically nullifies all other theories. This is "the eternal-atonement theory." According to this statement, the death of Christ is a temporal and finite exhibition of the infinite and eternal suffering of God on account of sin.

In passing, it may be noticed how the pendulum of

human thought, never at rest, swings first to one extreme and then to the other. In the moral-influence theory in its later development, we were assured that there was no necessity for atonement so far as the divine nature was concerned ; and now, in the eternal-atonement theory, it is asserted that there is the necessity of a limitless, timeless suffering of the divine nature. These extremes of statement indicate energy of thought ; but time does not go any faster because the pendulum of the clock is made to swing more widely. Extremes meet, we are often told. They do in this case. The moral-influence theory has been objected to because it reduces the meaning of the cross. This accusation may as readily be made against the eternal-atonement idea. Both of these statements agree in reducing the meaning of Calvary primarily to an exhibition.

The possibility of temporal divine suffering must, it is true, be grounded in the passibility of eternal God. The spirit of the cross did not have its origin at Calvary, for Scripture assures us that it was eternal. That this spirit eternally made atonement is a very different matter. This the word of God nowhere asserts ; in fact, it predicates the contrary.

Through his own blood (Christ) entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.⁴ How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit (his eternal spirit) offered himself with-

⁴ Heb. 9 : 12.

out blemish unto God.⁶ Else must he have often suffered since the foundation of the world . . . but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested unto the abolition of sin by his sacrifice. . . Christ having been once offered to bear the sin of many.⁶ The offering of the body of Jesus once for all.⁷ For the death that he died, he died unto sin once for all.⁸ For when he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever. . . For by one offering hath he perfected them that are sanctified.⁹

There was one passage of Scripture that seemed to give support to the eternal-atonement idea, and in fact, awakened it; but it is now agreed by most scholars that it was a mistranslation. In the Revised version it now reads: "Written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain."¹⁰ The translation, as here given, is strengthened by a parallel passage a few chapters later. It is as follows: "Whose name hath not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world."¹¹

Paul, in writing of the death of Christ, presented it as enabling God to be just, not simply to show himself just; to make right, not simply to show himself right. According to the eternal-atonement theory, Paul was wrong; for, if it is true, the cross did not so much enable God to be right, as to show himself right; not so much to be just, as to show himself just. Since there is a square contra-

⁶ Heb. 9 : 14.

⁸ Rom. 6 : 10.

¹⁰ Rev. 13 : 8.

⁶ Heb. 9 : 26, 28.

⁹ Heb. 10 : 12, 14.

¹¹ Rev. 17 : 8.

⁷ Heb. 10 : 10.

diction between the two, either Paul or the eternal-atonement theory is wrong.

The incarnation could as reasonably be interpreted as exhibiting an eternal incarnation of God, as the death of Christ an exhibition of the eternal atonement. To say that the incarnation was a temporal and finite exhibition of the incarnation of God in humanity is true; but far from the whole truth. To say that the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem was not so much the incarnation of God, as the revelation of the timeless incarnation of God in human life, is to furnish a parallel statement to that in the eternal-atonement theory, which says: "The death of Christ did not so much make atonement, as reveal the eternal atonement."

The primal fallacy of the eternal-atonement idea, or as it is sometimes called, "the internal atonement," lies in its identifying all divine suffering with atonement. This age-long suffering, which sin caused God, is part of the great wrong of sin and not the righting of this wrong. The agony on the cross was vastly more than a show-window sample of what fills the shelves of heaven. Moreover, eternal atonement for sin, which is not eternal, is atonement out of proportion and in super-erogation. Even though the divine anticipation of sin's wrong and the Redeemer's death was real, it was not realization of atonement. Anticipation of a wedding is not a marriage. Atonement is a term belonging to social and ethical relations, and cannot

be fitly or fully used to describe an internal state. An internal atonement is like an internal apology.

There are those who reduce the virtue of prayer to that of reflex influence. They have a respectable philosophy back of their interpretation; but such limitation of this active relation to God is no addition to the Christian life. There may be a respectable philosophy back of the eternal-atonement idea; but a reduction of the meaning of the cross and its Christ, a lessening of the place of the Son of God as Redeemer, is no real help to Christianity. That which presents Christ in his death as revealing, rather than making and becoming atonement, must fail to take hold on human hearts and consciences. Only that which gives the full and rightful honor to the Son of God and his redemption will be honored of God among men.

III. No explanation of the atonement is equal to the fact itself. No theory can take the place of the atonement. All possible theories cannot exhaust the fulness of its meaning. All the paths through a field do not make up the field. The size and mineral wealth of a plot of ground cannot be estimated by measuring the paths which cross it.

Think of some village green cut into fantastic figures by the paths which cross it, and you have a picture of the doctrine of the atonement as set forth by the combining of all the theories. Theories of the atonement are the paths of thought in this

great field. Some of them are old and worn deep; some are forsaken and grass-grown. Most of the paths meet near the middle of the field. There the ground is bare and trodden hard. At this central place rival teams of theology meet in spirited contest, just as baseball teams do on the village common.

The danger just now is that we forsake this field altogether because of the confusion of the paths and the noise of those who meet there. Then some have been unkind enough to make the place a dumping-ground. The field of the doctrine of the atonement is worthy of a better fate.

Let us not assume, on the one hand, that these theories are utterly worthless; nor, on the other, that they are final formulations of truth. An exclusive theory ever hides more in its shadow than it reveals in its light. Have we not noticed at night that shadows in the street are darkest where they intersect? So it is with theories of the atonement. The danger is that we may have the deepest shadow at the very heart of the matter. The atonement, like many other Christian doctrines, impinges everywhere on the transcendent. All theories of the atonement have, because of this, an unsupported end projecting into the unseen beyond. They are spring-boards, from which we may plunge into the ocean of truth. It is as impossible for them to do full justice to the subject with which they deal as it is for us to do full justice to them, because of

the vanishing element in them all. Since the atonement of Christ is unique, there can be neither a perfect illustration nor a wholly satisfactory theory of it.

It is because they have power to direct men to the Christ that these theories prove of religious value. Better any theory, however imperfect from an apologetic point of view, if it is warm in spirituality and strong in loyalty to Christ. Better a disjointed truth of faith than articulated unbelief. Imperfection that seeks to glorify Christ is better than the greatness that aims to belittle and oppose him. Not that we wish for weakness and imperfection! Let there be breadth of view without shallowness, strength of logic without loss of tenderness. Anything that will teach us even a small grain of truth about Christ's redemption is profoundly welcome. History has built for us a stairway of theories by which we may ascend to higher comprehension of the atonement; and in a grander than St. Peter's at Rome worship within the cathedral of Truth Him who is the Living Truth.

The worthiest appreciation of the atonement is, after all, not from the apex of a pyramid of theories. As a matter of fact, no man has an appreciative outlook on the atonement one inch higher than the height of his personal sacrifice for the world's redemption. The proportions of the atonement, as they appear to us, correspond with the measure of

the spirit of the cross in our lives. The theories are but the echoes of human heart-beats. The stronger the throb of love for Christ, the louder and clearer will be the theory echoing it. In the larger view, each theory is a new victory in the age-long war with human ignorance of the greatness of Christ.

The real theories of the atonement which we have, are not those put on paper and defended in argument. They are the lives we live. No man can vote without expressing his theory of government. No man can live the Christian life and engage in its service without expressing his theory of the atonement. Many a man votes right, who could not well express his theory of politics. The lives of Christians, far better than their words or writings, express their regard for Christ and his redemption. It is well that there are vastly more life-theories than paper-theories. The life-theory is the theory with life in it. Such theories cannot be expounded nor taught.

Thought is deeper than all speech;
Feeling deeper than all thought;
Souls to souls can never teach
What unto themselves was taught.

VI

THE CHRISTIAN CONFLICT AND THE
SABELLIAN COMPROMISE

Now it has sometimes been apprehended that the larger and deeper study of our Lord's humanity would, in a measure, impair the sense of his deity. There has been a not unnatural fear of approaching too near him, of "knowing Christ after the flesh." His manhood and his deity have been treated as truths in sharp antithesis, each in turn to be guarded from the risk of damaging admissions. To combine the two great verities into one harmonious whole, has ever been the difficulty of theologians. . .

The vital element in the great revelation is atonement for sin. So in the Epistle to the Colossians. There, in the unveiling of the mystery of God, redemption, the forgiveness of sins, stands first; then comes the wonderful description of Him who is the image of the invisible God, the "First-born of all creation"; and after the resources of language have been exhausted in the expression of his divine greatness, the apostle returns to this as the climax of all, that by the blood of the cross is the universal reconciliation. Atonement is first and last; and it is the law of sacrifice which conveys to us the deepest significance, both theological and ethical, of the divine humanity of the Word, the Son of man, the Son of God.

—*Samuel G. Green, D. D.*

CHAPTER SIX

THE CHRISTIAN CONFLICT AND THE SABELLIAN COMPROMISE

THE doctrine of the atonement is the center of the battle ground of theology. There is abundant reason for the clash of arms at this point. The whole ground of Christian doctrine has been fought over time and again; but at this strategic center the battle is severest. There the utmost strength of opposing forces is pitted in deadly contest. The atonement is the key position in Christian theology. On the fate of this doctrine hangs the destiny of our whole faith.

In the doctrine of the atonement all schools of thought focus their differences. The cross is the testing-place of religious affinities. There spiritual allegiance is plainly manifested, and every spiritual disposition takes out-and-out attitude. Nowhere else is spiritual vision so thoroughly tried. In the searchlight glare of Calvary every system is clearly revealed and every philosophy stands unmasked. There every one must declare himself. When face to face with the death of Christ, men make unique decision what to do with him, what he may be to them, and what he shall be forever more.

In presenting the doctrine of the atonement, everything depends upon the view of the person of Christ. This is all the more manifest when the atonement is presented from a personal and experiential point of view. He who is the atonement, must be known, if we are rightly to appreciate its place and value. It is redemption that gives to Christ's deity the most practical interest. Each reflects the depth of meaning in the other.

I. History repeats itself. Another great struggle as to the person of Christ is now on. The present-day critical movement has been leading directly to it. Criticism was bound sooner or later to fasten its attention upon the Christ. There it will most of all manifest the insufficiency of its processes. Between rational and experiential criticism there will be an Armagedon contest over the person of Christ.

The threatened Unitarian defection, of which Pres. A. H. Strong speaks in the introduction of the new edition of his "Systematic Theology," is no nightmare. Let there be no fear as to the outcome of the struggle. It will end as it did in the first instance. It will clear the atmosphere and place where they belong, men who have not understood what is fair, or who had not the courage to place themselves. This contest, which has already begun, will demonstrate that Christ is still a stone of stumbling or of building; still a rock that grinds to

powder or furnishes an imperishable foundation. His richness of revelation must blight or bless.

There is yet another reason why the path of the present lies unavoidably through this old battle ground. It is a direct outcome of our failure to obey a primary command of Christ. It is a thunder-toned proclamation of the fact that a large part of the Christian world has been practically idle in the task of evangelizing the world. The order in the Great Commission has been changed, and the school is now placed first. The college, rather than the Christ, is in this faith the hope of the world. Hence, to the university, rather than to missions, has the colossal giving been flowing.

For the moment the school has gained by this; but it stands in danger of losing its greatest place of honor, that of being forefront in the work of Christianizing the world. The kingdom of God cometh by education, only when preceded and accompanied by evangelization. Education, when not subsidiary to evangelization, when uninspired by Christ's missionary ideal, becomes a side-weight to the Christian structure, and eventually topples it over, carrying a large part of the building with it. Disobedience is ever a process of weakening faith, and obedience of strengthening it. Faith in Christ's deity always waxes or wanes with faithfulness or unfaithfulness to his commands. As to freedom and to truth, disloyalty always costs more than loyalty. When the South would not give liberty to

its slaves, it had to surrender its son's lives. When the Christian Church refuses liberty to the captives of pagan darkness, she must lose forever many of her sons and soldiers in the rebellion of heresy.

There is one most hopeful sign of the times to which reference should here be made. The Laymen's Missionary Movement is the mark of a coming awakening to normal Christianity. As one remembers the fate that overtook in the early Christian centuries hundreds of churches in North Africa, which substituted theological for missionary zeal, when he ponders also on what it has cost in consequence for the evangelization of the "Dark Continent," he must thank God the more that we may be saved from such withering and such adding to the world's burden.

II. For the moment the discussion pivots about the Virgin Birth. In considering the nature of Christ's person, very much depends upon whether his divinity is said to be integral or additional, conceptional or plenary, a divine begetting or a life attainment. If his divinity is but a super-addition to natural generation, any of the children of Joseph and Mary, and also any one else could have been the Christ. As many christs are then possible as there are persons whom God could have perfectly filled with himself. If Christ's personality was originated and constituted along natural lines, we have the greatest miracle of personality to be accounted for by an

infilling and addition which do not originate and constitute it. We are also given no adequate explanation why but one has thus been filled with God. Must not the method of the incarnation have been as unique as was the person of "the Only Begotten of the Father"?

It is permissible to speak of the divinity, but not of the deity of humanity. The term "deity," as applied to Christ, is, therefore, preferable. Man has undoubtedly the divinity implied in his having been made in the image and likeness of God. God is Spirit; but man has the physical as an essential part of his nature. A disembodied spirit is not full, normal humanity as we know it. This is one of the messages of Christ's incarnation and resurrection. In proportion as physical limitation is inherently a part of man's normal being, it is wrong to speak of the humanity of God. In proportion as there is the same moral likeness and the similar spiritual substance in both God and man, we may speak of the divinity of man and of the humanity of God. Even if man were all of spiritual substance, Creator-Spirit and created spirit are far from identical. The Uncreated Being, wholly spiritual, is not the same as the created being, partly spiritual and partly physical. The divinity in man is not identical in kind with the Divinity Eternal which made him. The view that deity and humanity are not at all different in nature lowers God without raising man.

There is a special sense in which the humanity of

God may be mentioned. It is the divine humanity in Jesus Christ. In the incarnation God entered into vital union with humanity, and therein embodied the divine life and person of the Son. We have kinship with the Christ because of his humanity and deity, but most of all because of his humanity. When speaking of his person after the incarnation, there should be no exclusive emphasis obscuring either his humanity or his deity. When his humanity is denied, we tend to emphasize it; and when his deity is questioned, on this we lay greater stress. Unless there was divinity in humanity, the incarnation could not have taken place. Unless in the nature of Jesus Christ there is humanity and divinity, the range of our relationship with God is immeasurably smaller than we had supposed. The union of humanity and deity in the person of Christ is the most sublime relational achievement ever effected; and it is the most precious of all relational facts ever declared, containing the revelation of salvation, of atonement, and of life.

III. The person of Jesus Christ is the embrace of human and divine natures. He is a divine person including human nature. He is God living a human life. From what he said (and no other source of information is open) we learn that he exercised the functions of personality before his incarnation. His divine personality was first. What his person is now, has come about by the mystery of his becoming

flesh, personally including human life within the divine, and merging his uncreated life into the realm and limitation of created human life.

To such statements our Unitarian friends will not, of course, assent. Usually they object that such is nothing less than Tritheism; but the tritheist has existed only in the imagination of the Unitarian apologist. Tritheism means three separate gods; Trinitarianism means three persons in one God. *Trinitarians have never taught the rival deities which tritheism implies.* There have been crude representations of Trinitarian belief that did not sufficiently guard against the possibility of this misrepresentation. Let us remember that Tritheism is not the only thing to be feared. When a man has become so devoutly afraid of it that he loses all dread of Unitarianism, his fear of Charybdis has landed him within the grasp of the monster in the cave of Scylla. As long as Unitarian belief results in lack of spiritual fervor and evangelistic aggressiveness, it is to be dreaded. Unitarians themselves have deplored times without number the lack of passion and enthusiasm manifest within their body. This lack could not fail to result, for the abandonment of Christ's deity cuts a main nerve of devotion to him, and leaves the body corporate without normal feeling and power. Dr. W. W. Peyton says:

Robert Elsmere and Roger Wendover, Matthew Arnold and Doctor Martineau have fallen into a species of Christian life which is not in the long succession of the broad

Christian life rolling these centuries, but which has struck out from it, and is a genuine variety, distinguished by the dominance of the intellect. They should be content with it, but not charge with mythology or superstition or unveracity what is really the essence of the Christian enthusiasm of these centuries. They know that their type of life has not at any time shown the Christian passion, or performed the Christian function.¹

It should be recognized that it is a battle of defense, not of choice, that is now forced upon Trinitarians. In this matter Christian belief is battling for its own existence. Its organic idea, the keystone in the arch of its truth, is the sacrifice of God in Christ. It is agreed on all hands that the highest thing in the universe is personality. If Jesus had not personal preexistence, God gained infinitely by his birth. He did not then sacrifice; he gained what he had not before, the Christ-person, the highest and best personality the world has seen. *The incarnation was, therefore, a gain, rather than a sacrifice.* Similarly, the death of Christ was not that of the one who made us, suffering with and for us. It was not a divine person who took upon himself our sins. It was a good man, a God-filled man only. "God so loved the world that he" had no "only begotten Son" to give; or, if his willingness to die for the world, made Christ the Son of God in the unique sense, "God so loved the world that he" did not "give his only begotten Son," he then begot

¹ "Memorabilia of Jesus," p. 13.

him. Jesus did not in the incarnation "empty himself" of heavenly glory. The "Kenosis" was a "Pleroma." Surely such an emptying of divine sacrifice leaves Christian judgment no choice of decisions in the matter.

IV. In every contest there are those who propose a compromise. Often such solution of the difficulty is to the advantage of both parties. The truth may lie between opposite forms of statement. Sometimes, however, compromise is impossible, for the contest is between truth and error, between righteousness and wickedness, between liberty and slavery, or between right and wrong. In such cases an offer of compromise is but the plan of the foe to gain time to build a midway fort or to dig concealed pits like those into which the English cavalry fell at Bannockburn. Acceptance of compromise when the contest is unavoidable and without quarter, is but holding out hands for the manacles, to be followed by imprisonment and death. Compromise may be an angel of God, or it may be a trap of the devil.

The compromise offered in the struggle with Unitarianism is not by any means a new one. It appeared as early as ante-Nicene days. It is Sabellianism. It cannot end a contest which, in its very nature, is truceless. It will but prolong the fight. If it is not "straight from the pit," it certainly is a pit into which many a good rider has tumbled, to be unhorsed and captured by the enemy. No com-

promise, such as Sabellianism proposes, is possible as to the deity of Christ. If it is conceded that he is divine in other respects than in his personality, the concession is not worth having. Such a remnant of divinity is not compromise, but abandonment, retreat, and defeat. If the person of Christ is not deity, his divinity has no special meaning.

The Sabellian compromise with Unitarianism cannot be overlooked, for many who profess to believe still in the divinity of Christ, have adopted it. This means that a substitution of divine mode in place of divine person, is agreed to; and also that God is one person. Here the real Unitarian inwardness of the compromise comes out. Sabellianism teaches that God is one person, revealed under three modes of manifestation, and that Christ is divine as a manifestation, but not as a person.

As far as the person of Christ is concerned, Sabellianism differs not one whit from Unitarianism in its conclusions. Nevertheless, most men feel that if Christ is not deity as well as humanity, if he is a person manifesting divinity, not divinity manifest in person, and if he is only the manifestation of God, not God manifest, he is as helpless as we. Less than deity could not mediate between God and humanity. As Principal Fairbairn says:

The Sabellian notion is as shallow as it is false; it may satisfy the intellect which thinks that the mysteries of the divine nature are amply explained if stated in the terms which can be worked into the processes of formal logic.

But the supreme necessity of faith is one with the ultimate necessity of thought—viz., a God who can be related to the universe, one who is not an infinite abstraction or empty simplicity, but who is by nature a living and, as it were, productive and producing Being.²

Sabellianism fails to give place to the very revelation of God which it agrees, is in Jesus Christ. The personality of the Father and of the mutual relations between the Son and the Father, are structural in the Lord's thought and life. Manifestations cannot enjoy fellowship and love each other. Sabellianism takes away the personality of the Father as surely as it does the deity of the Son. According to it, the Father is merely one of the trinity of manifestations; and, since there is only one person in the deity, he is but a fatherly manifestation, not a divine Father in person. Praying after the Sabellian order we should say, not: "Our Father who art in heaven," but: "Our Fatherly mode of heavenly manifestation." When we have replaced the three persons of the Trinity with three such abstractions as Sabellianism proposes, God becomes infinitely distant, and the Father can no longer draw nigh unto us in the person of his Son. It would be no longer possible to say:

Near, so very near to God;
Nearer I cannot be;
For in the person of his Son
I am as near as he.

² "The Place of Christ in Modern Theology," p. 398.

VII

PERSONALITY AND THE TRINITY

THE Fathers, who used the language which has been inserted in the creeds, and generally adopted in the church, never thought, when they used to speak of three persons in one God, of speaking of such three persons as they would speak of *persons* and *personality* among created beings. . . They held that the Father is the Head and Fountain of all Deity, from whom the Son and Holy Spirit are from all eternity derived, but so derived as not to be divided from the Father; but they are in the Father, and the Father in them, by a certain *inhabitation*. So, then, though they acknowledged the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost to be really three persons, yet they held them to have no divided or separate existence, as three different men have; but to be intimately united and conjoined one to another, and to exist in each other, and by the said ineffable inhabitation to pervade or permeate one another.

—*Bishop Browne.*

CHAPTER SEVEN

PERSONALITY AND THE TRINITY

SOME of the theological writers of the present day have been so interested in their own work, that they have not taken time to watch the forward movement in other lines of study. They have failed in some instances to keep track of the wonderful strides that sociology and psychology have taken. The result has been that psychology and sociology abandoned long ago, have been incorporated into some of the present-day theology. It is painfully amusing to note that the newer the theology, the older has been the psychology and sociology incorporated into some of it. The new wine having burst the old wine-skins, in the emergency there was pressed into service the Sabellian urn. No wonder, then, that the ashes of the dead are now found in the theological wineglass of the living.

While Sabellianism is in reality but Unitarianism in another form, the reason for its revival is interesting. It is the transitional condition which has for some time existed in theology and in all lines of study in general. Along the border-line of advance misapprehension and confusion are sure to reign. The general character of the advance has

rendered adjustment between the different branches of study doubly slow. Old forms of statement are being used to convey meanings they cannot utter; and old heresies are being revived and restated as progressive thinking. These are the handicaps of the new movement; and the sooner they are removed the better.

Some of our modern theological writers, when discussing personality and the trinity, have informed us that personality is self-consciousness, self-inclusiveness, and separateness. They argue that three such persons in the Godhead would inevitably mean three separate gods. If their definition of personality did not contain outworn psychology and discredited sociology, their conclusion as to the Trinity would be correct. That personality is not what they say, every pertinent text-book in the schools to-day asserts. There is not a solitary living psychologist or sociologist who would agree to this definition of personality as given by some of our new theologians.

I. To begin with, it is consciousness, not self-consciousness, which is fundamental in personality. Self-consciousness is but one form of consciousness. It is that particular form which has self as its object. Self is not by any means the only possible object of consciousness. Some time ago Prof. James Ward, of Cambridge, set forth the truth that all consciousness is a subject-object process, in

which the object cannot exist apart from the subject, nor the subject apart from the object, and that self-consciousness is precisely the same in process as consciousness in general.¹

God is a person. He is an infinite person. According to this definition of personality, he is infinite separateness, infinite self-inclusiveness, and infinite self-consciousness. How infinite separateness and infinite self-consciousness could ever get away from itself to create, it is hard to imagine. If God is infinite self-inclusiveness, there is nothing outside him, and all creation must be God over again. There is, then, no non-self from which to separate himself in his self-consciousness. With this view of divine personality, no consciousness in the universe is possible but that of God. He can be only self-conscious, for there is nothing but himself to be the object of his consciousness. This is the pantheistic consciousness of nature, in which God is conscious only in the consciousness of nature. This is Spinoza's view over again. In it divine personality disappears altogether. This definition of personality leads straight to a pantheism which denies the existence of divine personality.

A god who is fundamentally self-conscious, is morally unworthy. Self-consciousness is the psychological characteristic of selfishness. Infinite self-consciousness is infinite selfishness. The more per-

¹ "Encyclopædia Britannica," art. "Psychology"; "Naturalism and Agnosticism," Vol. II, p. 112ff.

sonality is exercised in self-consciousness, the more it grows unhealthy and shrinks. In what way God's loving and self-sacrificing nature could express itself in infinite exclusiveness and self-consciousness, it would be difficult to state. President Forrest says:

In one sense, indeed, personality is the most inclusive as well as the most exclusive of realities; the most universal as well as the most individual. The true definition of it may perhaps be its capacity for love; not for self-consciousness, but for self-sacrifice and life in others.²

Each person of the Trinity has self-consciousness, but not as a fundamental. Each divine person is conscious of others, rather than of himself; but the divine Mind is still a unity of consciousness, an infinite interconsciousness in complementary interblending. If it be said that the three subject-object processes of consciousness in the three persons of the Trinity would involve the same separateness of consciousness that humanity exhibits, it may be replied that consciousness in humanity is not what it is in Deity. Our moral nature affects all our psychological processes; and human character is far from that of God in ethical quality. What the consciousness of a sinless person is like, our experience does not tell us. One thing is known, however—the more a man becomes like God, the less self-conscious he becomes. A good man is brother-conscious rather than self-conscious.

When self-inclusiveness and separateness are

² "The Christ of History and Experience," p. 199.

named as characteristics of personality, there is made explicit denial of its fundamental in the social nature, without which personality would be reduced to an empty shell. Separateness is but self-inclusiveness stated negatively. There is no personality in heaven or on earth of which separateness would not be defect and stultification. It is distinctiveness that is a fundamental in personality. Personality is individuality; it is the distinctiveness of a social unity. Sociology teaches us that a man wholly apart by himself, is no man. Distinctiveness means that we are not facsimile repetitions of each other, for in this case the mechanical would replace the social. Each person would have nothing to give to others but what the other already had. The basis of social service lies in this distinctiveness and incompleteness of individual personality. Normal personality is socially inseparable and individually distinctive. Being wholly alike or wholly separate, we should cease to be persons. There is a social unity which is differentiated into personality. Without that social unity, its differentiation in individuality would be impossible.

II. The social nature of personality is so pronounced that in the existence of one person only, the term would lose its meaning. Let it be repeated, then, that the word, "person" implies the existence of others of the same order. Those who assert that there is but one person in the Godhead, are consist-

ent in passing on to the adoption of pantheistic impersonality. That is the logical terminus of this road. Some, of course, rest by the way, because they do not care as much for the terminus as they do for the road thither.

A solitary divine personality is the deity of vacuity. The social nature is the center of the life of personality. The social lives in and by the social. The social nature of personality can have no true content for its life, but that of other social lives. A person does not live at all except in social reciprocity, becoming the content of other lives, and in turn, having other lives become the content of his own. In God is found the original of man's social nature, for he is the original of man's ethical nature, and the moral cannot exist without the social. We cannot look to the divine nature for the original pattern of moral life, without at the same time looking there for the original pattern of social life. Either God is social, or he is not moral in nature. Either God is a social being, or there is no life of personality in the Godhead.

There is distinctiveness in the persons of the Trinity. There is a fatherliness in the Father which is not found in the Son nor in the Spirit. There is a mediateness in the Son, a deputedness to the end of immanence in the Spirit, which are not in the Father. Without the Son, who by the nature of his person as the agent of creation, can relate himself to created things according to their need,

deity would be an incompleteness. Of course, there must be unity in the Godhead, in the Trinity; but solitariness is not unity. A limbless rampic is not a better model of unity than a living, wide-spreading tree. The tree is none the less a unity because of its branches, for in reality they give meaning to its unity. The tree is one. The Trinity is also One. In fact, there is a sense, and that the very highest, in which deity cannot be said to be one, unless it is three. It cannot be said to be personal, unless it is tri-personal. The Three in One, and the One in Three constitute the very highest unity of the Trinity.

To place undue emphasis upon the distinctiveness of personality, and make it amount to separateness, is nothing short of being perverse. Normal distinctiveness is not abnormal separateness. The latter is a result of sin. As yet the social unity of humanity is but a thing of shreds and patches, because of iniquity. Ideal personality, normal in distinctiveness and perfect in social unity, is far removed from what human personality is as yet. While the word "persons" is in some respects inadequate to describe the Transcendent Three in the Trinity, still it must be used to designate them. It is vastly better than any other term at hand, even though it does carry with it the suggestion of certain limitations in humanity not found in deity. When there is transferred into our picture of the Trinity the defective outlines of imperfect human

personality, it is no wonder that such a presentation becomes, to some, a reason for the rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity. Only in God is ideal personality to be found. As Prof. W. N. Clarke says:

Probably the truth is that complete personality exists in God alone. He is the one perfect and typical person; and man as yet possesses personality in a rudimentary and imperfect way, as a growing gift which is gradually coming to perfection. We are compelled to define personality from ourselves; and yet we can thus obtain only a partial definition. God alone is fully personal.³

Is not Jesus Christ perfect in personality, fully personal? He is. Is he not God because of this? According to this reasoning of Doctor Clarke, we must either deny the perfection of the person of Christ, or admit his deity. Since God alone is fully personal, and since Professor Clarke further says: God is one person,⁴ we are forced to conclude that Christ is an imperfect person. If my esteemed teacher had given due weight to his admission of a serious limitation in our knowledge of the nature of perfect personality, how could he categorically assert that "God is one person"? Is this Unitarian statement securely established by arguing to it from our ignorance and imperfection, from what we do not know about perfect divine personality, and from what we do know about the imperfections of human personality? Doctor Clarke says again:

³ "Outlines of Christian Theology," p. 68.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

"Modern thought insists upon the separateness and self-included nature of personality—a conception unknown to antiquity."⁵ So much the better for antiquity. As a matter of fact, the emphasis of modern sociology and psychology is upon the incompleteness of personality in a separate self. That elusive thing, "modern thought," is scapegoat for a good deal of theological sin. Is it not the thought of moderns—a few of them—and not "modern thought," which has blundered into naming defects as fundamentals, and then drawing final conclusions therefrom? Prof. Henry Churchill King says:

This at least is true. Nothing calls for more absolute and complete personality than love and social relations. To affirm social relations therefore in the Godhead is to assert absolute tritheism.⁶

The most perfect love and social relations are exactly what Jesus did affirm most emphatically, as ever existing between himself and the Father. If the perfection of Christ in moral character and personality is accepted, the authority of his teaching in regard to the personal nature of God is established. That perfection, be it remembered, has never been assailed with facts. Who can convince him of sin, who, though tempted in all points like as we are, was without sin?

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

⁶ "Reconstruction in Theology," p. 192. Cf. Prof. W. A. Brown, "Christian Theology in Outline," p. 152.

It is well for us all to sit at Christ's feet and learn from him that his divinity did not at all involve his existing as a separate God. Since he knows most about personality and deity, it is well to stand by his teaching on the matter, even at the cost of being charged with tritheism. This tritheistic allegation is slim respect to the revelation of Jesus Christ. If one were to examine carefully in this connection the very many statements in the Gospel of John, setting forth the dependence and oneness in the relation between the Son and the Father, it would be made clear that Jesus guarded quite sufficiently against the accusation of making himself a God separate from the Father.

Looking at a few of these utterances in the order in which they are reported in this evangel, we read:

"The Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father doing: for what things soever he doeth, these the Son doeth in like manner. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth . . . that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father."⁷ "The living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father."⁸ "If ye knew me, ye would know my Father also."⁹ "I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me; he hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing to him."¹⁰ "Though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."¹¹ "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father: . . . I am in the Father

⁷ 5 : 19, 20.
¹⁰ 8 : 28, 29.

⁸ 6 : 57.
¹¹ 10 : 38.

⁹ 8 : 19.

and the Father in me. The words that I say unto you, I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works."¹² "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me."¹³ "And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."¹⁴ "That they may all be one, even as thou Father art in me, and I in thee. . . And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one as we are one. . . for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."¹⁵

If the deity of Jesus were for the moment granted, would it mean that as such he must be less in unity with the Father than as a man? If so, deity is poorer in the best than is humanity. To unity with the Father, Christ's deity was not an embarrassment.

III. In the Trinity may be seen the archetype of the moral and social unity of mankind. Where else could the original pattern of this unity be found? It must have its proto-type in the Maker of us all, or be counted an improvement upon the possibilities of deity. It could not be found there, if God were but solitary personality, for then a higher social and moral unity would be possible to creation than to the Creator. A tri-personal Deity has within the pattern of all that is good in the moral and social

¹² 14 : 9, 10. ¹³ 15 : 26.

¹⁴ 17 : 5. ¹⁵ 17 : 21, 22, 24.

realm. It may turn out that the spiritual and moral strength of God may be best portrayed in the quality of the unity of the persons of the Trinity. It looks as though it were that unity which sin finally attacked in the atonement and found invincible.

Though denying the existence of social nature in the Deity, Dr. James Martineau gives an interesting definition of it as found in man. He calls it: "A mutual complementing of defective humanities." That he means defective in a good sense is shown by the context:

The second affection is perhaps less conspicuously marked, but equally undeniable: I mean the social; directed not only to our like as the former (the parental), but to our equals as respondent natures, holding up the mirror to our being, and at once taking us out of ourselves and sending us into ourselves. Perhaps if we were to press the inquiry to the last resort, we might find that between *absolute equals, mere self-repetitions*, this affection would hardly arise; that some differences and inequalities must still mingle with the general identity of type, to touch the secret springs from which society arises; . . . So in the wider circle, the real combining principle is a mutual complementing of defective humanities. Certainly between man and woman, between elder and child, the unlikeness is an important element in the attachment, delivering the heart from the staleness of self-repetition; . . . and I see no reason to doubt that a similar secret necessity of completing some ellipsis of consciousness enters into the general texture of human ties.¹⁶

¹⁶ "Types of Ethical Theory," Vol. II, p. 146.

Doctor Martineau evidently did not see what an ellipsis there would be in the divine nature void of the social element, for he says elsewhere :

No attribute could be named which we could assign to that lonely, unrelated God. We should speak of him only as we should of darkness, or of blank infinitude, by mere negation. That he has no parts, no limits, no passions.

Thus the solitary unit filled eternity's fearful silence. How different is all this from the revelation which Jesus gave of God as all light and in whom there is no darkness at all. On the one hand, we have the idea of a solitary divine unit, the icicle of a frozen imagination; on the other, we have the revelation of warmth of life, the mutual complementing in the social relations of the Father, Son, and Spirit.

In the fundamentals of personality is the will. The strength of personality may be measured in the strength of will. As personality grows, the will increases in strength. Jesus was a strong personality. The strength of his will is revealed most significantly in his refusing to will anything contrary to the will of his Father. The relation of the two wills adequately sets forth the relation of the two divine persons. Though he had a will of his own, the Son never willed apart from the will of his Father. Though he exists as a person, the Son has no personal existence apart from that of the Father. The same is true of the will and person of the Spirit. There is one triune will of deity. Here

is the profound mystery of the Trinity—three wills, yet only one thing willed: three persons, yet but one divine Being.

We must not expect to solve the mystery of the Trinity. A God without mystery is a God not even so great as man. Ah! what a world of mystery is in humanity. There cannot be anything more known of the divine nature which does not add to this mystery. What a manifestation of God was made in Jesus Christ; but in revealing the Father he at the same time must bring into view the mystery of the Trinity. If it were possible to penetrate the mystery of the triune God, then we should doubtless find ourselves in the presence of yet greater mystery. The more a man knows the more he is weighed down by the sense of the comparative littleness of his knowledge, and of the unfathomable depths of mystery in the divine nature. We are not here on the shores of time to measure with the little cup of human comprehension the infinite ocean of divine existence. In conclusion, it may be said that in the co-personal being of the Trinity lie the same essential mystery and transcendency found in every phase of the divine nature. As the poet Young says: "A God alone can comprehend a God." Our Lord also says: "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." ¹⁷

¹⁷ Matt. 11 : 27.

VIII

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

THEN as to truth being mighty, it is rarely considered that it can never come off victorious unless it takes the field. Who ever heard of apathetic, silent truth succeeding against active and eloquent error? Our Lord was not slow to answer his adversaries. The early Christians had their elaborate defenses; and I question whether any assault has been checked by allowing it to continue unopposed. Truth is mighty; but it is not mighty when it skulks—seeks a hiding-place; and never has it prevailed, and never can prevail, until it bravely meets the enemy face to face.

—George C. Lorimer, D. D.

WITH all other deficiencies in our ordinary Christianity every earnest Christian thinker is continually thrown back to feel that its fundamental defect is an imperfect knowledge of its great head and center—Christ. Christ is Christianity. He does not merely teach; he is the religion which we hold. To know it, we must know him. He is not merely the revealer, but the truth. Hence comes the high ambition to know more of the Saviour in order that our share of the salvation may be more complete. Who is he? What is there in him that fits him for his work? When did his work begin? The New Testament comes in answer to these questions to tell us all that we may know of Christ.

—Phillips Brooks, D. D.

As sound reaches us from external objects through the auditory, and vision through the optic nerve, so knowledge of spiritual being external to us, comes through our spiritual susceptibilities, through intellect, conscience, feeling, and will. The only requirement in the case of sense or spiritual impressions is that we shall have capacities for and correspondences with objects external to ourselves. One chief difference in the two kinds of impressions is that those which are spiritual affect our entire nature—moral, religious, and intellectual—while sense impressions may affect the knowing faculty alone.

—Pres. E. Y. Mullins, D. D.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

To some the deity of Christ may seem an iceberg floating in the sea of theological thought, chilling the atmosphere far and near. To others it may seem a Mount of Transfiguration, where midst light and glory the Father acknowledges his Son and bids men hear him. We may account for these different experiences by the two contrary conceptions of deity which are current. Each conception naturally leads the person holding it to take religious attitude to Jesus Christ in conformity to its nature, thus begetting an experience of the one kind or of the other.

In the preceding chapter the Mount of Transfiguration may look too much like a fort, inaccessible to friends as well as to enemies. Nevertheless this doctrine will not defend itself; and is least of all doctrines adapted to apologetic form. The Lord prevails when his servants fight; but in apologetics we are too prone to battle as Peter did in Gethsemane. Let us not be severe with the militant disciple. He was better than the indifferent or idle spectator. Later, keener weapons replaced his blundering sword; and the great preacher of Pentecost found it easier to gain men's ears than to cut them off.

I. The Son of Man claimed to be deity. There is no doubt on that point. When charged with making himself God, he did not deny it. Jesus knew full well that his claim to deity was either true, or it was the most blasphemous arrogance possible. He was all that he claimed to be; or he was the most unbridled impostor the world has ever seen. The old riddle—how he could deceive, or even be deceived in this matter, and yet live the unparalleled life—is still before us. Nothing in his life and moral character tends in the slightest degree to discredit his claim of divinity. He lived as a Son of God. So far as moral character, deeds, and life were concerned, God could not be better. “But one is good, even God”; and Jesus Christ was perfectly good.

As to the deity of Christ, the argument from experience is the best defense, because it is the most helpful. When we sum up other kinds of proof, for and against his deity, we are face to face with the choice of accepting him to be all he claimed, or of accounting him a deceiver or, at the least, deceived. The experiential argument has no such dilemma; for no one who has tested his deity after this fashion, has been left in doubt as to its reality.

An experiential inquiry into the divine nature of this great person, requires that the whole personality of the investigator be put into the investigation. Not in the first instance nor at any time thereafter, did the doctrine of Christ's deity arise from

intellectual inquiry alone. An intellectual investigation alone cannot therefore be trusted to discover and verify its truth. Mere intellectual examination of such transcendent matters must prove insufficient and unsatisfactory. The greatest credentials of deity are not given to the mind alone. Exclusively intellectual investigation into Christ's deity must land almost invariably in the Unitarian position. The revelation and proof of his deity may come to both mind and heart, but never to the mind when to the heart it is denied. Only the soul, as a whole, may discover or receive its own revelation. The real credentials of Christ's deity are not philosophic statements nor theological treatises. They are the logic of life, not of mere syllogisms. The only line in which a full and impartial investigation into Christ's divinity can proceed is along that of the experiential results from its full acceptance. The service, life, and spirit which belief in his deity begets, are the sufficient proofs of its reality.

The reality of Christ's deity, back of the Christian life and originating it, is known fully by the life thus imparted. Unrestricted Christian experience alone gives adequate room for the wide range of the proof of Christ's divinity. A battleship cannot be sailed in a saucer. The full revelation of the mystery and transcendence of Christ's person cannot be crowded into the human mind. Wrapping a suit of clothes around a man's head does not test whether or not they fit his body; and applying to

the intellect alone the revelation of the Lord for the whole soul, must result in serious doubt of its truth.

Experience is the final argument; but it is not the final argument unless it is the final experience. Experience is final only when begotten by the final faith. Experience is not final when fractional; and faith is not final unless highest in type and fullest in scope. Personal faith in the Saviour is that which is highest in character; and the experience of sharing in the divine Saviourhood is that which is fullest in scope. Receiving the Christ has its own revelation to the soul; giving him has a greater. Back of experience and faith is a spiritual disposition in kinship with them. The disposition to which the divine manifestation is possible, is that of intent and anxiety to do the will of God. Christ said: "If any man willeth to do his (God's) will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from myself." This teaching in summary, was: who he is, whence he comes, what his mission is, what man's need is, and how it may be met in him. He makes this challenge: Be in life what I am, by receiving from me the necessary help so to be, and you shall know me; in your faith give me place as the Son of God, and I will vindicate my right to it; grant me your life as a channel through which I may run the water of life to this thirsty, dying world, *and you shall be a proof of my deity.*

When men deny themselves the very experience that fully reveals who Jesus is, it is not surprising that they do not have this revelation. When men have not reached the transcendence of the Person of Christ in experience, it is no wonder that they should reject that transcendence as a doctrine. Experience, rather than discussion, is needed in proving the divinity of Christ. A man with an experience which compels him to attribute deity to the Lord, might argue for a lifetime with one not having such an experience, and fail to convince him.

II. If some one should say that faith in Jesus Christ, as deity, begs the whole question, the fair reply may be made that nothing is assumed in faith that should not be, and nothing can be tested without it. Faith is the foundation and beginning of all investigation. We must believe that we exist, that our senses and processes of reasoning are trustworthy, and that the thing examined exists. None of these can ever be proved. Especially in moral, spiritual, and personal matters, faith must lead the way in their investigation. To refuse to investigate by faith means that we have no faith in our powers of investigation. The only question is, how far faith is warranted in going. Certainly, it must go far enough to make possible the revelation which it seeks. The ability of a guide to lead out of the woods is not tested by the faith that follows him only for a step or two. No man can reveal honor or

honesty beyond the range and extent of the confidence which he has enjoyed. Christ's deity has been tested only in so far as it has been trusted. Faith in Jesus takes him at his word, and thus gives him a chance to prove that he is what he says he is—the Son of God. It will then be for him to measure up to the place so given, or to fail.

Faith alone can bring within the grasp of reason the facts of the nature of Christ's person. Faith is ever the engine which draws corn into the mill of experience. Reason is the millstone which does the grinding after faith has brought in the grain. There is absolutely no other power of transportation than that of faith. Its activity must, in any case, precede that of reason. It may furnish only chaff for the grinding; but faith must fill the hopper, for reason cannot grind with an empty hopper without causing heat, smoke, and its own ruin. The millstone cannot draw the grain, nor the railway engine do the grinding. Faith goes out after the harvest of facts concerning the deity of Christ, and brings them into the mill of experience. Reason then grinds this grain into the flour of truth that we may have the Bread of Life. To begin with doubt as to Christ's deity is to burn the bridges, tear up the track, and dynamite the engine.

Reason does not more need faith than faith reason. Faith that is normal makes room for reason. The one must ever work in conjunction with the other in mutual helpfulness. As giving is not losing, but

gaining the disposition to which God can unreservedly give his best, so exercising faith is not blinding, but unsealing the eyes of reason that God may reveal to it unlimitedly of his best. To some of his disciples the resurrection of Christ had at the first no more standing than an idle tale; but later it became verified fact. The deity of Christ may have at first no more standing than discredited doctrine; but later it may become the most precious jewel placed by faith within the casket of reason. Reason may be more fleet-footed than faith and arrive first at the sepulcher, but faith is the first to enter. Faith makes the discovery of the fact possible; but reason immediately settles itself before the task of apprehending the meaning of the fact, and of squaring intellectual with experimental proportions.

III. The difficulty about the person of Christ is that of securing a theological statement of it, commensurate with the proportions which he fills in normal Christian experience. Reason would have denied that such a person could ever be found on earth. He lived the spotless life among men. No other one on earth has exercised such vast powers of spiritual helpfulness and taken such undying hold upon human hearts the world over, as he, an obscure person in a remote province. Reason alone would not have expected that one within the narrow bounds of Palestine, living but three short years of ministry two thousand years ago, could exercise such un-

limited influence upon the life of the world to-day. All these, however, have come to pass; and reason must weigh well such tremendous facts in forming a personal estimate of the Christ.

More important than all such facts, in the main external to the experience of the individual, are those within his experience as a member of the kingdom of God. Both the revelation and proof of Christ's deity are here progressive in character, for experience is itself progressive.

The more important a doctrine, the wider must be the realm of fact supporting it and the broader its basis in experience. Those who were first associated with the Lord as disciples did not reach their full estimate of him at once; it grew with experience. After the resurrection, with its exultant joy, and Pentecost, with its spiritual ecstasy, he who had earlier asked, "Whom say ye that I am?" now led them by his Spirit to shape in fuller proportions their estimate of his person, as they sought to save others and to share their joy with them. In the natural development of experience in the kingdom of the Lord, there comes thus an increasing revelation of the transcendent nature of Christ's person; and the sense of proportion compels a corresponding doctrinal statement of his divinity.

The Scriptures are a record of a progressive revelation of God; but there is the progressive revelation of experience as to the Scriptures. The longer one lives by them, and the more he gives of

light and of life to others through them, the stronger to him becomes the proof of their inspiration, and the more unique does the Bible appear. In the same way, if we keep company with the Lord long enough in his work of saving the world, we will come to the fuller revelation of his deity. In this matter, very much depends upon the place in life which Christ and the Bible are allowed to fill. The same process that brings the revelation of the divine in the one, will bring it in the other. It is worthy of note that the doctrines of the inspiration of the Scripture and of the deity of Christ are usually accepted or rejected together.

Life is everywhere a continual withering or development of ability to see God. It depends upon how men are investing their lives as to what the word of God and the Son of God are to them. As there are no high privileges not balanced by equally high duties, so there are no great revelations not balanced by equally great cost in obtaining them. The opportunity of serving a revelation is also the opportunity of receiving one. The greater the opportunity missed, the greater the resultant atrophy. In any case we get exactly what we pay for at the store of experience. We never fail to get the revelation which belongs to the kind of life we live.

God has ordained that the glory of the person of his Son shall be hidden from those who do not put the kingdom of God first in their interests. The

more heart we have in that which is most in the Saviour's heart, the better may we understand his heart—and him. The broader our contact with the outgoing life of the Son of God, the greater our range of vision in things divine. Those who keep company with the Lord in his work of saving the world, will not need to seek proofs of his deity; they will have them without seeking. He who would know Christ by thrusting the fingers of investigating criticism into his sacrificial wounds, may learn of a more excellent way. Let him thrust his hands into the work to which the Saviour, in his final command, directed. The presence of the Lord in the soul, and the unique revelation of divinity which goes with it, are both given to those who work Christ's work of the world's redemption.

The disposition which intuitively accords him the place of deity, is unfailingly created by contact with Christ in the divine movement of saving the lost. Beholding the resurrection of dead men through the power of the risen Christ, one instinctively exclaims, "My Lord and my God!" Such confession is founded on better evidence than that which Thomas saw. Better than beholding the crucifixion marks on the risen Lord, is beholding the marks of the Christ-life in those once spiritually dead. Those who loudest deny the divinity of Christ, would be first in proclaiming it, did they let the spirit and service of Christian evangelism make its revelation to them. More powerful in argument than all apologetics, and

more convincing than all Christologies, is the experience of personally transmitting the Christ-life to others.

IV. The experience which compels us to ascribe divinity as well as humanity to Jesus Christ, arises from the place he occupies in the kingdom of God. He who in rebirth enters the kingdom, and in sacrifice surrenders himself to its extension, comes face to face with the proportions which Jesus there fills. He is head of the kingdom; he forgives sins; he sends the Holy Spirit; he is the vital force, the magnetic, personal center of this realm; he carries on through the ages the work of saving the world; in a word, he exercises prerogatives far beyond those of man, and not less than those of God.

No man, however God-filled, could fulfil the promises of Christ. No mere man could do the work which he is doing, no matter how much God was with him or in him. Surely he must be God, for he bulks infinitely beyond what may be included in the category of man. The line of his activity far exceeds the bounds of human limitations. The power which he exercises far outreaches the utmost which man can wield. The functions of humanity cannot be stretched to include the prerogatives of deity.

The sinless life has been lived. Words for which the heart of man has long hungered, have been spoken. A life so strong in goodness that it is

able to lift all lives which lay hold on it into familiarity with God, has done, and is still doing, its superhuman work. Though long ago his life on earth was finished, he still manifests here an abiding presence; and is constantly transferring the saving power of his own life to human lives. Transforming these lives, doing what no resident forces or laws of this world can account for, still living with and within us, and bringing forth in human life the richest morality and spirituality by his indwelling—these are records of the work of divinity. Nothing but deity is adequate to explain it all.

In the history of Christian experience the fact is unmistakably clear that the closer lives have been held under the influence of Christ, the higher have been their attainments in ethical character and spiritual life, and the more abundant has been their service to God and to the world. Lives like Livingstone's and Lincoln's are attestations of their Master's divinity. In human experience deity is recognized by the character and scope of its work. *The range and quality of interests which Christ awakens in men, clearly announce who he is; the richness of his life, the breadth of his love, and the vastness of his moral powers unmistakably manifest his divinity; the orbit of the Lord's activity proclaims his deity.*

The saving of men from sin requires not less than a divine agent. Deity and the salvation of the world stand over against each other as proportionate. They are mutual and commensurate in revelation. The

tremendous scope of Christ's work of redemption is an exhibition in due proportion of his divinity. One never knows how hopelessly lost this world is, till he tries to save it; he never knows what a divine Saviour Jesus is, till by the Christ he is set at work saving this world.

To be where even a glimpse of the Lord of life at work in the kingdom of God may be had, is to behold how far beyond man he is; but to be there, means that one has come to give help in this great work which Jesus has on hand. He who shares in the work of saving the world, shares unfailingly in the revelation accompanying the work. In proportion as a man yields himself to this great task, will the reality of the deity of Christ impress him. The life given as a lever to the Lord with which to lift the world into right relation to God, will recognize the hand using it to be that of divinity.

Faith in and love for Jesus as the Son of God have never been disappointed; and they constitute the most searching test. The closer we come to him, the more we find to adore. It is the very richness of his helpfulness that makes so interesting the mystery of his person. He is all that we could ask for in God and humanity. He is perfect humanity in relation, and perfect God in revelation. The person of Christ combines the infinite down-reach of God and the infinite up-reach of man. In him is summed up the full scope of human possibility and the measureless self-giving of God.

Christ is as much greater than man as the power he wields is greater than man's. No mere man fits the throne of the Lord. We cannot but deify him for his work's sake. We must conclude that he is in proportion to what he does, and is, therefore, more than man. Since in saving man he has exercised the functions of deity, the doctrine of his person must be stated accordingly. Since he is God the Son in human experience, he must be God the Son in theology also. As Tennyson sings:

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house or digs the grave,
And those wild eyes that watch the waves
In roarings round the coral reef.

IX

THE MEANING OF SIN

THE world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those who feel.

—*Walpole.*

Nor if I had a hundred tongues, and a hundred mouths, and a voice of iron could I retail all the types of wickedness, and run over all the names of penal woe.

—*Virgil.*

No good or lovely thing exists in this world, without its correspondent darkness; and the universe presents itself continually to mankind under the stern aspect of warning or of choice, the good and the evil set on the right hand and on the left.

—*Ruskin.*

CHAPTER NINE

THE MEANING OF SIN

THE meaning which any one finds in the atonement is determined almost wholly by the meaning which he finds in sin. The depth of our understanding of the one will ever correspond with the depth of our understanding of the other. The Godward meaning of both is, of course, the deepest. Iniquity means that God is not recognized, is not given his place, though the sinner may at first be unconscious of this meaning of his sin. It is astounding that Perfect Holiness and Almighty Righteousness should be opposed and that Immeasurable Goodness and Ilimitable Love should have an enemy. In the history of ethical experience sin is, however, an unmistakable fact. True, there are systems of thought that would blind the moral sense by their denial of the existence of iniquity. To such we cannot do better than quote the words of John:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. . . If we say that we have not sinned, we make him (God) a liar, and his word is not in us.¹

The greater the blindness about the existence of

¹ 1 John 1 : 8, 10.

sin and its nature, the swifter and more awful its ruin. Facing a group in the grocery in which he worked, a clerk said not long ago, "Sin has no real existence. What a man does, he cannot help doing." Within a few weeks after he absconded with his employer's money, and brought disgrace and sorrow to home, church, and community. It is the old, old story over again. Sin does not disappear on denial of its existence, and its results do not change with men's refusal to accept the facts of its real character. While they go on quibbling about its existence, sin goes on putting love to God, human happiness and welfare out of existence.

I. There is no greater curse in the shape of creed than that which denies the existence of sin. Theology is never more inexcusably shallow than when it is superficial in its estimate of sin. Part of what it has done to a man may be judged by the view which he takes of iniquity. Where it has left him, may be told by what he thinks about it. The dressing up of sin in the dreamy colors of pantheistic philosophy, is itself a misleading of iniquity. Alas! Sin can as insidiously warp the theologian as worst the drunkard. Its existence is not at all confined to coarse and brutal forms. It is all the more subtle and seductive the higher the sphere and nature in which it works. Scripture tells us that fools make a mock at sin. Surely the prince of fools is he who stands smiling at that which has destroyed his sanity.

It has been truly said that all our heresies start from a false estimate of the sinfulness of sin. Certainly, one of the rotten-ripe fruits of iniquity is blindness to its existence. The soap-bubble theories of speculative theology are a poor exchange for the biblical estimate of sin. These child's-play bubbles are iridescent for the moment in the light of novelty; and then their hollowness breaks into their essential nothingness. A human demon a short time ago lured away a little child suffering from a broken arm, assaulted, and murdered her. If you were her father, gazing at the expression of horror upon the distorted face of the dead child, lying midst the tall weeds upon the river bank, and speculative philosophy with bland smile thereupon should announce to you that the outrage and murder of your child were but the mistaken quest of God, would you then take the fiend incarnate to your bosom and to your home in his search for God? You should do so, if this philosophy is true.

Sin is too inveterate a mistake to be all mistake. It is a blunder too persistent and stubborn in the wrong to be accounted the quest of anything right. True, sin is a mistake; but it never blunders into the quest of God? Does it ever seek God, it is as the assassin seeks the king. It is moral insanity to say that all wrong-doing is really the attempt to do right. When it is asserted that, as far as we can see, all sin is simply the faulty seeking of the divine, is it not clear that we do not see at all, and that we never

shall without having removed from our eyes the cause, namely, philosophic cataract?

Whatever theories we may hold as to the origin of sin, it is here. "The real and vital question before men is not how sin got here, but how to get rid of it." ²

One way not to get rid of it, is to deny its existence; another way is to present it as less dangerous than in fact it is. The stock objection to a realistic description of sin is that such is not sin, but a personification of it, treated as a self in itself. While sin has no separate, metaphysical existence, it has moral and experiential existence. It does not exist outside of personality; but the same may be said of goodness and of every other moral element. Goodness is not falsified when personified. No more is evil. Sin is an ethical entity. As goodness is not a dead quality, but a living principle, so sin is not an abstraction, but a living power. Badness (one of the weakest descriptions of sin) is as definite as goodness. *Sin is the vital principle of a degenerate spiritual life.* As the late Prof. G. B. Stevens said:

Hence sin is not merely error, or weakness, or natural imperfection; it is moral perversity, a false direction. It follows that sin cannot be merely negative—a mere absence of good. Sin is as positive as goodness.³

Iniquity is not mere slips in the climb of development. Badness is; sin exists. It is definite in type,

² Rev. N. R. Wood, "The Witness of Sin," p. 19.

³ "The Christian Doctrine of Salvation," p. 319.

and clearly and unchangeably opposed to goodness. It is goodness in no degree. Ritschl well says: "Sin is not an original law of the human will; for it is the striving, desiring, and acting against God."⁴ To accept on the one hand the monism which says that badness is but goodness in disguise, or on the other, the Persian dualism of two gods, one evil and the other good, would alike be fatal to all that is exalted in Christian thought and morals. There is, nevertheless, an essential dualism in all monism. It is the dualism of the essentially opposite. There is the dualism necessary to ethics and without which morality and spirituality would cease to have meaning. It is the dualism of the good and of the bad, of right and of wrong, of holiness and of sin, which every one assumes in discussing moral and spiritual concerns.

Physicians are sometimes blamed for making their diagnosis in the anteroom instead of in the sick room. Certainly a good deal of anteroom-diagnosis of sin has occurred. Its friends say: "There is not much the matter," and after a hurried glance, philosophic calomel is handed out in treatment of this spiritual leprosy. It is a serious thing if the diagnosis of a dangerous physical disease be cursory and untrustworthy; how much more so in the case of the diseased and dying soul? If diphtheria is mistaken for the headache with which it begins, and

⁴ "Justification and Reconciliation," p. 329, (Eng. Tr., Macintosh and Macaulay).

Asiatic cholera accounted a germless imagination that one is sick, how can the prescriptions to follow be of any value whatever? They will be worse than useless. Physical diseases do not lessen their virulence and contagion by denial of their reality. The sincerity of those who deny that such diseases exist is invariably belied by their legs when a case of smallpox is discovered in their midst.

Sin is both a functional and an organic disease of the spiritual nature. There was an awakening of the medical world when the bacteriological nature of some diseases was discovered. So ought there to be a great awakening in the theological world to the biology of sin. For one thing it would help to banish the vapid nonsense about sin being purely negative, or merely immature good. It is no more immature good than tuberculosis is immature physical life. According to spiritual pathology, sin must be accounted a disease of the vitals of the soul. In moral biology sin is as definite in kind and as pronounced in type as the streptococci are in bacterial life. Its degenerate life, its feeding upon the moral vitals, its symptomatic fever, its effect in ravings, its deranging the divine faculties of the soul, and its creating passion for opposing God, all show it to be distinct as to species. Normal moral life and sin life are as distinct as health and disease, and are forever separate in type.

In the case of physical disease, symptoms are often confused with the disease itself. The hectic flush,

the hollow cough, and the emaciation of form are pronounced pulmonary consumption. No! These are the symptoms and results. You must behold the tubercular bacilli at work to see this form of consumption. As with physical disease, so with the spiritual. Back of the symptoms and manifestations there is that which must be understood and treated. Students of pathology are divided as to whether abnormal conditions are responsible for the presence of bacteria, or the bacteria are responsible for the presence of abnormal conditions. The question whether a perfectly healthy body is immune to all disease, may be left in care of the medical doctors; but it is now recognized by all genuine scientists that conditions alone can in no case produce life of any order. Abnormal spiritual conditions of themselves cannot produce sin-life. Sin did not have life imparted to it by circumstances. Conditions of a certain kind are essential to its propagation; but they must be distinguished sharply from the originating life itself. Hell did not create sin; sin created hell. Iniquity hollowed out the bottomless pit. Evil laid the foundations of the diabolic domain. Badness constructed the infernal abode. Sin was the architect and builder of the place of eternal torment.

While sin has an existence as the disease of the spiritual nature, its full effects cannot be so stated. It is not only virus, it is also venom—the virus of the fever of hell and the venom of the demon. It is

the mock metaphysical entity of sin that makes the study of its existence so tantalizing. Everywhere it is a mockery. In reality it is the mockery of ethical reality. Since the highest form of truth is personality, the truth of the existence of sin and the highest form of its existence, will be found in personality. There is character and personality which is the perfect expression and exact embodiment of sin. "The man of sin" is the ripened fruit of sin. The possibility of the perfect personality of goodness carries with it unavoidably the possibility of the perfect personality of sin. The unvarying aim of either goodness or sin is to personalize itself. We may be blamed for personifying sin; but its constant struggle is to develop personality, the sole object of which is diametrically opposed to the purposes of God. The demon is sin in a perfectly representative character. Satan is sin's perfect personification.

II. What a force sin is, what a diabolic might! What power of enticement and enchantment, illusion and deception, seduction and destruction it has! What energy of conquest it shows! How it interpenetrates the innermost of the moral being of man! Behold its ability to pervert, paralyze, enervate, and wrest from right relation! What intelligent and purposeful power it shows in fructification, propagation, concentration, and organization! No man can encompass in the sweep of his moral vision all the vast horizon of sin and the breadth of

its dominion. Think of the countless millions it has enthralled, of the numberless hosts held tightly within its octopus grasp, till their struggles are over! Its vice is ever the vise of death. Its grip is relentless. What a vast amount of moral life it has taken to feed this monster! What strength of deep-rooted existence it has! What almost indestructible vitality! What has it not done? What can it not do?

So long as man is drugged by it into insensibility, he little realizes its power. While he runs with unslackened pace in its race-course of ruin, he is little aware of the force sweeping him on to the bottomless abyss at its end. When awakened, he finds there is no turning back. It is when one tries to escape from the Niagara current of sin, sweeping him irresistibly down its rapids, over its brink, and into the whirlpool vortex below, that he awakens to the torrent energy which makes him the plaything of its marvelous might.

Sin is the soul of a degenerate world of persistent and truceless enmity to God. Every life it inhabits, it molds and moves to express that enmity. There is a social structure of its own, based on rank of subserviency to its ends. It is a world-spirit, the organic spirit of systematic piracy which preys upon the domain of God. Sin is the soul of that organized, degenerate life. To say that sin is an organized, degenerate spiritual life is true, but painfully inadequate. It misses the soul of the degeneration.

What is most important to account for, is the genius, the substance, and the source of this degenerating agency.

It is most difficult to account for the social affinity, the organic unity, the spiritual solidarity of sin. It may be said there is no isolated, unrelated evil, any more than there is isolated, unrelated good. Let those who will, laugh at the thought of an integral homogeneity, a social solidarity in sin. When any one engages in a battle of moral reform, he finds the affinity of iniquity, the nature of evil to relate itself and its power to combine in organized aggressiveness or defense, to be no laughing matter. The merest tyro in reform knows this much. These things cannot be fully explained, for we do not know everything about anything. This, however, may be pointed out: the social nature of those infested by sin may be used to form the organic basis, the social structure which sin manifests. Back of that, and beyond it, there is the essential affinity, the sin-spirit, the unity of sin-life, which baffles investigation. There could be no unity of organization, if back of that there were not unity and homogeneity in the life and spirit which thus organizes itself in the moral nature and social institutions.

As goodness in man is allied with goodness everywhere, so sin in man is affinity and alliance with evil everywhere. The genius of it is ever the same. It is a changeless, psychic energy, a tremendous spiritual power. It manifests a high grade of intelligence to

reach its ends. It has remarkable ability to organize and mass its forces, to entrench itself and carry on its agelong strife. These are weighty facts from which proportionately weighty inferences should be drawn. Sin is the total aggregation of evil spiritual energy, bound together by its own inherent affinity, Herein is the alarming seriousness of sin in that it unavoidably involves alliance with all evil.

III. Nowhere is the authority of Christ more needed than in the teaching concerning sin and its consequences. Nowhere is rejection of his authority more fatal than here. To say that he shared the mistaken notions and the hollow superstitions of the time, is flatly to accuse him of incompetency and practically to renounce him where most we need him. It is a matter of the utmost concern whether Jesus' estimate of sin is fiction and fancy or true.

Jesus taught that sin is the begetting of kinship with Satan, and that sinners do the will of the evil one. The late Prof. G. B. Stevens said:

Sin is presented as alliance with Satan, a kinship of spirit with him. Beyond this general idea no explanation of the origin and development of sin is offered in the tradition of our Lord's words.⁵

If Jesus lived the best life on earth, he is the safest authority on the nature of sin. He who has perfect sight can best tell what blindness means and misses.

⁵ "Theology of the New Testament," p. 197.

His mind is clearest and his conclusions sanest, whose life is purest.

The greatest light upon the character of sin comes from what it has manifested toward Christ himself. It is the abstract of this which Ritschl states:

The only way in which an idea of the bad can be formed at all, is in comparison with the good. The more or less complete the latter, the deeper or shallower will be our conception of the worthlessness of sin.⁶

To quote again from Professor Stevens:

He alone of all men perfectly knows what sin is, and adequately realizes its evil, because his alone is the perfection in contrast with which sin acquires its meaning and receives its condemnation.⁷

It is, therefore, in the light of what God is, and what sin did with the Son of God, that the most faithful examination of its meaning may be made. The lime-light of the peerless life of Christ reveals most clearly the blackness of the character of iniquity. Then there stands out in darkest outline the moral form of sin against the pure whiteness of the Christ-character. In his crucifixion there was flashed upon the sensitized plate of the Christ-soul, the picture of sin at work in the darkness which it had created. In the unfading light of the Unconsumed Burning upon Calvary there was photographed for

⁶ "Justification and Reconciliation," p. 348.

⁷ "The Christian Doctrine of Salvation," p. 303.

the first time in full, the hideous features of iniquity.

An exceedingly important fact in apprehending its meaning, and one worthy of the most utmost emphasis, is that the sense of the seriousness of sin is quickened in proportion to the degree in which we are possessed by the Holy Spirit. It is a great part of the work of the Spirit of the Lord to convict men of sin by conveying to them God's feeling about it, even as his word conveys to them his mind on this matter. The greater the power of the Spirit, the more awful in the sight of God does sin seem to us. The clearer the impress of God's Spirit, the more hideous and inexcusable does sin appear. Even in places where ages of pagan darkness have blinded and withered the moral sense, the Holy Spirit makes his message as to the divine feeling about sin, fully understood. Rev. J. E. Chute, a missionary at Akidu, India, writing to one of our religious papers concerning the revival on his field in the autumn of 1906, said:

It has been a matter of common remark among all the missionaries of India that the people of this country never seem to have any depth of conviction of sin. I have often felt this in my work hitherto, and had often made this same remark. The reason for making that remark has now been taken away with such a vigor, as we hope there will never be cause for ever thinking so again. "I have never seen such conviction of sin in any part of the world," is now the remark made by those who have seen the special working of the Spirit in such times as we have had during the past weeks. The power of conviction in

a great many instances has been simply overwhelming. The anguish of soul passed through has been awful to witness; and when peace began to dawn, one felt as if he had begun to emerge from the shadow of death and hell.

Concerning the revival in Pyeng Yang, Korea, a year later, Rev. Lord W. Gascoyne-Cecil wrote to the London "Times," in part, as follows:

With a rush a power from without seemed to take hold on the meeting. The Europeans described its manifestations as terrifying. Nearly everybody present was seized with the most poignant sense of mental anguish; before each one his own sins seemed to be rising in condemnation of his life. Some were springing to their feet, pleading for an opportunity to relieve their consciences by making their abasement known; others were silent, but rent with agony, clenching their fists and striking their heads against the ground in the struggle to resist the Power that would force them to confess their misdeeds. From eight in the evening till two in the morning did this scene go on; and then the missionaries, horror-struck at some of the sins confessed, reduced to tears by sympathy with the mental agony of the Korean disciples whom they loved dearly, stopped the meeting. Some went home to sleep, but many of the Koreans spent the night awake; some in prayer, others in terrible spiritual conflict. . . . Bishop Turner said that what most impressed him about this great turning to Christ, was that the Koreans as a nation were not emotional.

When one knows what sin means to God, then, and only then, does he know what it is in actuality. If to-day all preachers and religious teachers saw eye to eye with God as to the character of iniquity,

with what thoughts of thunderbolt and sentences of lightning flame would they describe it. At the beautiful salmon fishing grounds of the Restigouche River, in New Brunswick, Canada, a person on the bank high over one of its pools can see the fish lurking at the bottom, which cannot be observed at all by the fisherman at the water's edge. So the nearer we come to God's standpoint, and the greater the moral altitude from which our view is taken, the more clearly may we see all that lurks in sin.

It is only the sane sense of the presence and character of God that can truly realize the meaning of sin. Bring God down from the towering moral heights pictured in the Scriptures, and sin rises proportionately out of the dark depths of its guilt. Reduce the Deity to spiritual principle or to pantheistic impersonality, and sin at once becomes illusion, a mere moral figment. Let God reign in the white-capped altitudes of unimpeachable holiness, or rise before us in the moral and spiritual grandeur of his Son, and sin in its slime cowers in the darkest caverns of hell. Ah! It was not for naught that Infinite Love inexorably hated it, and in uncompromising sacrifice sought to blot it out. The love of God means therefore the relentless hate of sin.

IV. Sin is preeminently a wrong to God. It is the terrible treason that tries to wrest the throne from Perfect Goodness and Illimitable Love. It is one long, incessant attempt to dethrone the Deity. The

Apostle John well describes it as lawlessness, anarchy.⁸ It turns the heart into a dark chamber of treacherous plotting against the government of God. It is the ceaseless attempt to undermine the dominion of the Divine.

One sin is incipient war with God and all good, a league with the devil and all evil, a potential hell replacing heaven. It is not merely assault upon the throne of God; it is the blow struck full at the face of the Father. Sin is the unsheathed sword and the straight thrust at the heart of God. It is the crucifixion of the good, the slaying of the Son-of-God-nature, the murder of life divine. Sin never rests till it has crowned innocence with thorns, and made its spear-thrust into the heart of unsullied righteousness. All sin is alike the torture of divinity; it is the heartbreak of deity.

Sin wrongs God in man as surely as it does man in himself. More of God was needed in the making of a man than in the making of a world. Sin wrongs God most, because he is greatest; but it injures him most in his greatest world—that of mankind. There is no place where iniquity can so easily do God tremendous injury as in the realm of humanity. It has wronged the divine in every human relation and interest.

In the plane of his divine relations lie the arteries of the life of man. Wounded in these his spiritual life quickly ebbs away. Sin maims the religious.

⁸ 1 John 3 : 4.

faculties of the soul, cripples man's moral being, and paralyzes the powers by which he should serve his Maker. In separating mankind from God, sin immeasurably injures both. It robs man, not so much in the trash of purse as in the treasure of life. While it is mutiny against God as captain and owner of the ship of life, it is also piracy to those who sail its mighty sea. Pillaging his cabin furniture and cargo may bankrupt man for the voyage of life; but taking away the life-rudder of his religion, stealing the anchor of his faith in God, and cutting away the moorings of his soul, his fellowship with the Father, sin turns him adrift on a wintry, storm-swept sea without hope or chance of aught, save shipwreck in the thick darkness of midnight on roaring reefs of unutterable woe and amid the chill, black waters of everlasting death.

Sin wrongs God in blinding human eyes which were meant to look up into the face of the Father, upon the beauty of his character, and out over the glory and goodness of his works everywhere. It poisons the heart which he made to love him. It sows in the soil of humanity a distrust of Deity, and thereby perverts its strength into producing a harvest of unfitness to live for God. It renders man insensible to the indispensable, blind to his divine need. Poor, indeed, is he who is robbed of his God. Low is the life sunken below the plane of divine birthright; and dark is the day without the sunlight of God's presence.

All chance of gain is lost in sin; for it destroys the very foundation of gain. There is no advance but in God; and there is no gain but God is partner in it. Selfishness is a principle of losing, not of gaining. Nothing is ever really possessed in selfishness. Before its method would work, God must cease to be God. The world is a rescript of the divine nature. God does not live for his own sake; and nothing which he made was intended to exist for its own sake. This is the cohesive principle that holds the universe together, and makes it worthy to be called a world. Sin is the disintegrating process that attacks this essential principle of all creation. Infesting man's nature it sets him alike against God and his world. It opposes the divine unselfishness by which the universe is served, and seeks to break the bands by which it is held together.

Sin wrongs not only God and the universe, it wrongs as well the man who commits it. It robs him of right relation to everything. It takes from him the priceless capacity to know the Father. It builds the soul into a barricade against God; by it the soul is transformed into a God-vacuum. It is the displacement of God, the enthronement of a mockery. It enslaves the soul to the opposite of that for which it is structurally fitted. It perverts the functions of both body and soul. Its entrance results in loss of spiritual capacity, degeneration of moral character, destruction of divinest powers, alienation of love to God and man, shrink-

age of being, and loss of self-control, of life, and of soul. Iniquity contracts the circle of existence; shrinks to the infinitesimal the scope of life. It is the leakage of life, and the inlet of death. It is the persistent and pestilential parasite that sucks the heart's blood; it is procuress to death and hell. Sin is the sale of the soul to Satan, the curse of man, the cause of all his misery, and the very defeat of humanity. It makes man's the discordant voice in the song of praise to God which all the rest of creation sings. By it man becomes the broken bone, wrenched out of joint with all the purposes of God.

Sin's record of wrong to fellow-man has filled the history of the race. Reasonably seeking God in the lives of his fellows, and finding but bitterest disappointment, man looks upon them all as living arguments why he should forsake the Most High. The life of fellow-man is the roadway in which humanity must travel because of its social nature. Finding no footing there for his faith in God, man totters helplessly into the bottomless mire of godlessness.

For long centuries sin has kept humanity busy undoing itself. It has made man the greatest curse of man. It has created deep-rooted enmity and blotted out brotherhood. It has developed hate and withered sympathy. The ship of life, which was intended as passenger to human personality and freighter to human needs, sin turns into a black, sullen warship, or a merciless pirate. The castle of humanity which should have been shelter, hospital,

and home for the weary and wounded on the journey of life, iniquity turns into frowning forts bristling with armaments and belching forth death to the swaying ranks and broken groups which come within range.

Sin sets man developing all possible evil in his brother. Has it not made us adepts in the art of torturing our own kind? Has it not taught nations to laud the wolfish instincts, and led them to spend all the centuries in developing the art of murdering each other? Does it not blind statesmen to believe that the measure of national greatness is ability to fill the trenches with countless dead, and the homes of the land with widows and orphans in bitter loneliness? Damned war! How we laud and love it still! It is not so much that we have brutalized the man with the hoe, as that we have deified the man with the sword.

War has slain its thousands, but strong drink its tens of thousands. Alcohol does worse than gash and slash to death with sword and saber. Yet men legalize this engine of damnation and the saloon for its trade of filling hell. Drug shops of death are licensed in the hope of restricting the business of hell's undertakers. Because of the blindness of sin, men of brain hand out from legislative halls and city council chambers the swords that daily drip with the blood of innocent babes and helpless women. But for sin there would not be put upon the head of the greatest murderer in the world the helmet of State

protection. It is because of iniquity that in the name of Jesus upon the brow of this Judas is placed the golden crown of legal right.

Business too, no less than war, is carried on by the sword in this world of sin. Scarce a need of man, that is not used to enslave him. Scarce a necessary of life, that some greedy corporation does not control and exact for it what price it pleases. It is called business to extort from the purse, bleed the veins, or ruin the soul, according to the nature of the financial campaign against fellow-man. Sin takes bread from the hungry, clothing from the shivering, and home from the family. Human blood is turned into gasoline for the motor cars of the world's pleasures. The juggernaut of wealth crunches under its wheels all who chance to lie in its path. Sin flaunts its heartlessness in the very faces of those whom it despoils. Men find enjoyment in human misery, and misery in the redress of human wrong. Within the sound of the world's suffering men are using what could relieve it, to dehumanize their own natures, blast their own lives, curse their own children, and ruin their own souls.

What indignity has not man received from his fellow-man? Sin has made man a fiend in his treatment of man. He has plucked off the hair, dug out the eyes, lopped off the ears, cut out the tongue, pulled limb from limb, hacked the quivering body in pieces, burned it alive, drunk its blood, feasted upon its flesh, and left birds and beasts to devour what little

remained after his brutality had glutted itself. Lust prostitutes the mother, the maker of the home, and even little children are sold to the life of shame. In the name of love fair lovers are shot dead, fathers slay their wives and children, and mothers their unborn babes. They who could have made this world a heaven below, have by sin made instead a deep, sobbing hell; and man cannot keep his brother in the place of torment without staying there himself.

No book could contain all the story of sin's wrong in man's inhumanity to man. Suppose even one day's injuries could be summed up, what mind could grasp the proportions of the dread catalogue? As the sun sinks to-night in the west, what happiness and hopes of human hearts upon which it rose so fair, are broken and shattered forever! Before it rises to-morrow morning what beauty, purity, possibility, and power will have vanished utterly! In the pale light of the dawn will lie the upturned face of the dead, the light of whose life was snuffed out by the hand of iniquity. "The dead tell no tales," say we? Tell they not the most awful tales of the dark night of sin's wrong and the never-ending tragedies hidden within the folds of its darkness?

If the bones of those who have died because of human injustice were piled together, what a heaven-towering monument to sin it would make. If all the tears which humanity has wept because of wrong from fellow-man, were gathered unto one

place, what a sea of sorrow it would be! If all the human blood that man has spilt were gathered unto one place, what an ocean of gore would roll in crimson waves! If all man's moans and groans and cries of fear and hate and terror could be accumulated into one, what a deafening, thunderous roar of human agony would rend the heavens!

The crush of selfish conquest, the crash of broken governments, the clash of nations, the roar of war between labor and capital, the cries of the robbed and of the starving, the hoarse laugh of fiendish lust, the shout of murderous mobs, the shrieks of the slaughtered, the huzza of the world's colosseum as men tear out each other's bowels for its sport, all mingle in an awful din that echoes up earth's hill-sides and beyond mountain peaks in the vast resounding dome of heaven and into the ears of God himself.

This chapter has scarce begun to state the significance of sin. To interpret fully its meaning in human language is utterly impossible. No man could realize to the full the wrong of his own sin—and live. To know the Godward meaning of iniquity as Christ did, we would die as certainly as he did. To feel toward the sin of the whole world what God feels to-day, we would be consumed with the flames of our own indignation; we would pass out under the power of the passion that broke the heart of the Son of God.

X

THE MEANING OF ATONEMENT

WE cannot atone to others for the wrong we have done them, nor can we even atone to our own souls. A third party, an infinite being, must make atonement, as we cannot. It is only upon the ground that God himself has made provision for satisfying the claims of justice, that we are bidden to forgive others.

—*Pres. A. H. Strong, D. D., LL. D.*

It is from the fountain of his love that Christ's atonement came. The Son himself, who was free indeed, came to do the Father's will, "that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do," he said as he arose and went thence. He has not done his work upon us until he has brought us to the Father's feet; until he can say, "Of those that thou hast given me I have lost NONE." . .

But human analogies help us, and indeed the doctrine of the atonement without them would be a mere blank for our minds. So I seem to see how it is that the simple receive and understand the plainest preaching of the glorious truth of propitiation, and leap to it; while those, whose minds are overlaid with speculation and what is called culture, find it difficult. Alas! we often see theologians, even evangelical theologians, using infinite evasions and subtleties to disencumber themselves of the one weapon without which the evangelist can do nothing at all.

—*Sir William Robertson Nicoll, M. A., LL. D.*

CHAPTER TEN

THE MEANING OF ATONEMENT

THERE is a law that the greater God's gift the greater is its cost to us in the right use of it. Language is an example of this. It is a perplexing possession. To speak so as to be understood and to interpret correctly what has been said, are not easy tasks. To convey thought is harder than to think, because sharing thought is better than mere thinking. Expression is more than utterance.

Individuality must be taken into account in the matter of language, for seldom does the thought from the mold of one mind fit perfectly into the mold of another. There is also the difficulty of step and pace in thinking. Long strides, occasional leaps, and great speed of thought on the part of a writer, limit the number of persons who are able to follow him. Individuality in expressing thought has a counterpart difficulty of subjectivity in interpreting it. It is fatally easy for a reader to assume that anything which comes into his mind is in the book. Careful reading is hard work. The effort to determine exactly what the author said or meant to say, tests our ability and training. When a seminary class was told by their teacher that not more than

one college graduate in ten could read, they all laughed. In less than ten minutes their laughter was turned into chagrin.

Language itself is an imperfect means of expression. "Words half reveal and half conceal" their import. Their flexibility in meaning, their varied shades of significance according to order and position, together with the other difficulties named, make perfect expression and understanding the exception, rather than the rule. In profound subjects like that of the atonement, imperfect expression and interpretation abound. Perhaps this explains in part the endless discussion upon this theme. Exceptional care should therefore be taken in defining the terms used. A foot of definition may save leagues of misapprehension. In defining the term atonement, there will be marked out the course which the ship of expression is about to take in the great sea of thought on this subject.

I. First of all, it may be said, there is no definition of the term atonement which could be given that would be acceptable to all. Every school of thought would be alert to entrench itself in the definition given; or, failing that, would at once object to the definition. At the outset the most that can be expected, is a tentative definition, resting upon the substratum of the general usage of the term. Each word has by common consent a definite content, for terms are designations. Words are not

adapted to appropriation by individuals. They should not have private value attributed to them, and forthwith be thrust into currency again at this private valuation.

Final definition is an extremely difficult, if not impossible, task. We make our little fence of words around an object, and then imagine that we have defined it; yet, when careful examination is made, lo! more of the thing thus defined may be outside of our enclosure than within. Even the portion corralled is enclosed in but one way; it is not ensphered. How far it dips down or reaches up, the definition does not say. Truths thus penned up have a strange fashion of dropping out of sight into the earth or of disappearing into the air.

The attempt to define them fails to reach the innermost of some of even the commonest things. Music is an example of this. One must despair of ever defining the warbling harmony of feathered songsters, "Sweeter than the instrument of man e'er caught." No earthly language may define the melody of salvation's song which broke the starlit silence on the Judean hills, when the choir door of heaven swung open, and angelic notes were wafted down in the rapturous chorus, "Unto you is born, in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." It takes a whole Bible to explain the atonement. No one can encompass in a sentence of definition that which thus took God many ages to reveal. The full meaning of the atonement in its innermost

and utmost exceeds the compass of the mind of man; it is broader and deeper than the measure of mere intellectual statement. While the atonement thus transcends definition in human language, the term designating it does not. It would not be a term at all if it did.

In tentatively defining that which in its nature is transcendent, there is grave danger of an emasculation. The term designating such may be defined as to its fingertips only, and not according to its heart and brain. For example, it is said that the atonement is that which removes an objection in the mind of God to the pardon of sinners. This may be true; but with the term so defined, discussion of the doctrine of the atonement would be so restricted as to render it well-nigh worthless. It is not worth while discussing the price and plumage of the bird if the cage is empty. Definition must be more than cage; it must be content. One cannot define bird music by shaking an empty canary cage; nor can one define the term atonement by rattling the dry bones of the theological systems of the past.

II. In selecting a working definition of the term atonement, two things must be kept in mind—the single point of view, and the natural sphere to which the term belongs. A definition, including several points of view, must prove a barbwire entanglement in the line of our advance. Pudding-stone does not represent as high a process as does

quartz crystal. Conglomerate definitions have little prismatic power for the rays of truth. Seldom may a satisfactory working definition be found among those of the dictionaries. This is because of their tendency to over-inclusiveness. An example of such may be taken from a valuable work of to-day. It says:

The atonement is the reconciling work of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in gracious fulfilment of the loving purpose of his Father, whereby through the sacrifice of himself upon the cross once for all, on behalf of, and instead of sinful men, satisfaction was made for the sins of the world and communion between God and man restored.¹

The single point of view must be a commanding one. If it is too low in location, a large part of the horizon of the subject will be invisible therefrom. The etymologist from his deep dug pit calls out, "Down here is the single point of view; here is your working definition. Atonement is at-one-ment; it is reconciliation." However, D'Israeli and many others have warned us that the etymologist is not to be implicitly relied upon. His dissection of the term may go no deeper than its epidermis. The theologian who goes but "skin-deep" in the meaning of sin, is sure to stop with an etymological definition of the term atonement.

It is necessary to know the horizon of a term, as revealed in the general usage of it, in order to be in a position to estimate the real value of a definition

¹ "Dictionary of Christ and Gospels," art. "Atonement."

of it from the point of view of its derivation. For example, the term "sanctified" means, according to its etymology, "made holy." When we find that in Scripture, God and Christ and the Bible itself are said to be sanctified, it is plain that much of the horizon of this term would be totally obscured by its definition from the point of view of derivation.

Almost everything in the matter of its definition turns on the decision, as to what is the natural sphere to which the term atonement belongs. If it is held to be the social, then reconciliation may be accepted as its full meaning. Testing this by sweeping the horizon of general usage, we find that persons are never said to be atoned for when they are reconciled. A man is reconciled to, but never atoned to, his brother. To reconcile does not always mean to atone, and to atone does not always mean to reconcile. A man smuggles goods into a country. He later repents of this and makes atonement. This does not mean simply that he and the State are reconciled. It means that he pays the duty with interest. It means that he makes reparation, that he makes amends for what was wrong in act. It is true that reconciliation may be included in an atonement as the social part of its effect; but it is a juggling of terms to make atonement and atonement mean always the same thing; and it is confusing to describe its effect as its cause.

Atonement is fundamentally an ethical term. It has to do with the social sphere, because the social

is inseparably related to the ethical realm. The moral point of view gives us the full sweep of the horizon of this term. A study of the atonement from the point of view of experience and personality, calls for a definition of the term from the point of view of moral experience.

Atonement is that which rights a moral wrong. Unless first there exists a moral wrong, there is no need of, and no room for, an atonement. As to the wrong, more than its righting cannot be done. Right cannot be improved upon. Atonement is the ethical constituent by which the wrong done is undone. As a term it designates that which is central in the repair-principle of the moral world. In essence atonement is a matter of making right. The substratum of atonement is *righteousness*. This is in abstract its qualitative essence.

The dynamic essence of the atonement is love; but love is primarily social as well as ethical. It is self-impartation and self-propagation. *It varies in its moral content.* What love is in ethical status, depends upon the ethical status of the self which thus asserts and begets itself. Love alone is, therefore, not enough to constitute atonement. Atonement is atonement when love moves in it, and also when righteousness has its way. All love is not atonement; but the greatest love is that which makes atonement.

The dynamic of the ethical is never found except in the social. What moral wrong could be truly

made right without love, when all such wrong arises from lack of love? Nevertheless, it is better in defining atonement to balance the ethical term "wrong" by the ethical term "right." We could say that atonement is the blotting out of estrangement by reconciliation, but even though we have then balanced a social term by a social, the range of such a wrong usually goes far beyond that of mere personal estrangement.

The ethical point of view does not prevent, but rather gives content to statements of the meaning of the atonement in other realms. In the social, atoning is righting an estrangement, by means of a reconciliation; in the spiritual, it is making reparation for the dissatisfaction of holiness; and in the personal, the inclusive realm of all, atonement is the living ethic of personality righting by its existence that which is a wrong in its very existence as well as in its deeds.

In the realm of religion, *atonement is that which rights a spiritual wrong*. Here we have the term defined not only intensively but extensively. In a religious sense atonement is so pregnant in meaning that it needs to be defined, not only as to its qualitative and dynamic essence, but also as to its extent or range. We cannot convey the idea of extent by an expression of essence. In definition the qualitative and extensive may accompany and supplement each other. For example, a social wrong is not the less an ethical one; but in

so naming it, the location of it is given and the relations in which it moves are designated. The social wrong is ethical in quality and social in range. The spiritual wrong is ethical in quality and spiritual in range. It moves and has its being in the spiritual relations.

The spiritual includes God. It is true that any wrong, no matter how small, affects him; but the term designating it may not call attention to this fact. The spiritual term does, and thus helps to convey the religious meaning of atonement. A wrong to God is more than a wrong to his ethical nature; and the wrong may be committed by that in man which is not termed as his ethical nature. In the spiritual realm, man wrongs with his entire nature; and in wronging God he wrongs his entire being and the whole spiritual universe; but a wrong to God's love, to any other part of his nature, or to his nature as a whole, is still an ethical matter. It is the subjective in activity or the objective of the wrong, and not the essential quality of the outgoing act that may be other than ethical. Wrong is never anything else than wrong; but the seriousness of its meaning may be conveyed by taking into account the nature and importance of the realm in which it takes place. The spiritual wrong is the greatest possible. A wrong cannot lie deeper than the ethical and reach farther than the spiritual. Atonement for a spiritual wrong must take into account God and the whole spiritual universe.

III. Truth in its original, final, and most comprehensive form is personal. The terms of abstract ethical quality and social force cannot fully express the meaning of the atonement. The concrete act, life, and person of him who exists as atonement, together express its ethical substance and its causal essence. In a normal person the social, ethical, and spiritual exist together in natural adjustment. The ethical substance of personality is a living thing. Undue emphasis upon the abstract and partial truth of the lower spheres of truth always leads to unbalanced statements of the atonement.

Interesting questions may be asked at this stage. First, what is the wrong to be righted in the Christian atonement? It is sin. Iniquity is a wrong in every direction, wronging the Infinite most deeply, but wronging even the finite infinitely. Some phases of its wrongs are the destruction of moral character and spiritual life, the estrangement of man from man, and from his Maker, and the disruption of the ethical fabric of God. Back of all such effects of sin is the parent wrong of its existence. The greatest thing about God is his existence; so with sin. Great is the wrong that sin does; but greater far is the wrong that it is. This is the primary wrong which is made manifest in sin's involved power of self-propagation. It has been said that sin is such an offense to him that God cannot pass over it in forgiveness without atonement. This is true; but what could be so great offense as to continue

multiplying the offense? Surely, it is the existence which ever multiplies itself and thereby increases its offense, that, first of all, God cannot overlook. Is not sin the worst penalty of sin? Is not the worst thing about sin that it leads to more sin? Surely sin's existence involving constant reproductions of itself, is the offense of all offenses. Sin's greatest Godward wrong is its existence. *This heart of the wrong of sin, the heart of the atonement must cover.* Atonement means an ethical covering; and one existence can in this way be covered only by another. Unless we can agree that the greatest wrong of sin is its very existence, a fundamental matter will be in dispute.

It is not here affirmed that the wrong of sin's existence and reproduction is its only wrong. There is a wrong that sin is, and the wrong that it does. No hard and fast separation of the two can be made; they go together as the mad dog and the bite. Atonement must also cover the injury that sin has done. Not only should the mad dog be killed and the spread of rabies stopped, but also the bitten child should be saved from death. Only as the latter is done, is the spread of the dread mania and disease really stopped. Atonement making right for the wrong of sin's existence involves the necessity of also making right the wrong that sin does.

Is all that is done in righting the wrong of sin to be classed as atonement? In one sense it may.

Atonement may appear in partial and lower forms; but in the Christian sense, only the higher and fuller forms are usually termed atonement. The Bible helps to right the wrong of sin; but it is not spoken of as an atonement. In the best and fullest sense, only the self-sacrifice of the divine is atonement, for only this is broad enough to cover the vast expanse of sin's moral wrong.

How is the wrong of sin righted, and by whom? Such an inquiry searches the profundities of the atonement to their innermost. The wrong of an existence and its propagation could not be made right by a mere act, even of God himself. That which is a wrong in its very existence, may be atoned for only by that which is a similar existence. The wrong of an existence of inveterate murdering is made right only by that which exists to blot it out in death, and to give life in place of the life lost. As to the evil of sin's deeds, atonement is made therefor by that which is the opposite to it in ethical principle, activity, and life—that is the divine. The atonement is the instatement of the life of God by sacrifice in the death of the Redeemer. Nothing but the personal life of God is rich enough in goodness to make good for human iniquity and great enough in righteousness to right the wrongs of sin in existence, propagation, and works. So far as atonement can be made by an act, the death of Jesus Christ is such, inasmuch as it was brought about by his identification with sin; so that when

he died, sin died both actually and potentially. The death of Christ was atonement in that the person of Christ was thereby instituted as atonement and his life instated into the work of destroying sin, righting its wrongs, and answering in satisfaction before God for those who accept him. The meaning of death must be sought in the meaning of life. If there were no life, there could be no death. If there were no living atonement in the person of Christ, there could be no atonement in his death.

It is often said that sin and atonement are but abstractions which theologians make. Would to God that sin were but an abstraction! A realistic treatment of sin and of atonement must state their realities in terms of experience and personality. If sin destroys, it is in moral experience. There too must it be killed. The figure of the slaying of sin expresses the reality of its destruction. So atonement in experience will be atonement in effectiveness and actuality. Exclusively human experience is, of course, not meant. As we do not know the meaning of love, whether human or divine, except as it is interpreted to us by our own loving, so our understanding of the atonement must proceed from what we know of it in our experience of the atonement. While we cannot hope to state in full even what experience has revealed, yet expressing it in the terms of personality we may be understood by persons. Love has its own language growing out of its experience. Christ is our language of love and

of atonement. He is our atonement. We have known him.

Immortal love, forever full,
Forever flowing free,
Forever shared, forever whole,
A never-ebbing sea!

Our outward lips confess thy name
All other names above;
Love only knoweth whence it came,
And comprehendeth love.

—*Whittier.*

XI

CHRIST OUR ATONEMENT

It is Christ then who, in the fullest sense, is our atonement, and our atonement is real in proportion to the reality of Christ in us. Our atonement is no merely past transaction; it is a perpetual presence; a present possibility of the life and of the self, the consummation of which transcends thought and desire. It is a "power that worketh in us." And the power is the power through the Spirit, in Jesus Christ, of God. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations forever and ever. Amen."

—*Canon R. C. Moberly, D. D.*

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CHRIST OUR ATONEMENT

THROUGH much of the story of Christ's ministry there runs a note of unfulfilled expectation as to his own nation. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." This disappointed hope has deep theological significance. We must not assume that his expectation was grounded on ignorance of "what was in man," for "he needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man." Nevertheless he could increase in knowledge and did learn by experience. He did not live mechanically according to a programme of foreknowledge. He hoped for the best from his own people. There was room for expectation in his experience, as in ours.

Man, having refused the Christ his place in Messiahship, the Father gave him the larger place as atonement. He entertained the Messianic hope in spite of the fact, that he knew from the first, he must die at the hands of his own nation. Did not this hope of becoming a Messianic atonement mean that he saw the possibility of becoming the atonement without passing through death? Could not he, who said before he rose from the dead, "I am the resurrection," have also said before he

suffered death, "I am the atonement"? Did it not mean that he knew himself to be the substance of the atonement, and that he looked upon death as the rejected, or life as the accepted, Messiah to be but modes in which this substance took form according to the need and circumstances?

When sin in its relentless murderousness would not let him live his life of love and sacrifice, Christ could become atonement for it only by passing through the death it would inflict. It compelled him to enter an atoning existence by means of death, rather than by means of a Messianic life. Had sin been of such a character that it would have permitted him to live, he could have been instated as atonement for it by his life; but this is merely saying that if sin were other in nature than it is, the Lord need not have died. There may seem to be a contradiction in some of the foregoing statements, but this arises out of the same mystery which makes a contradiction appear in connection with the prayer of Gethsemane: "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine be done."

I. God has always been at work righting wrongs and making atonement in a measure, according to his means; but in his atonement by Jesus Christ the wrong of sin was met by the fullest form and highest substance. There were the lower forms of atonement in the sacrifices of things and

the acts of persons; but never before had a divine person become an atonement. In his death Jesus became the Living Atonement. Then was the supreme moment of eternity and the perfection, fulfilment, and embodiment of all atonement. In this personal atonement all other forms found meaning and value.

Just here we may note the teaching of Scripture as to the personal nature of the atonement. Men often speak of the satisfaction to God in the death of Christ; and quote the passage: "He is the propitiation for our sins," saying, "That is metonymy—the person named for his death." *But the New Testament nowhere asserts that the death of Christ propitiated God the Father.* Every passage referring to the propitiation of atonement says that Christ himself is the propitiation. The verb to propitiate occurs in the New Testament in one instance as follows: "That he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."¹

The writer of this epistle then goes on to show that this "great high priest" "offered himself without blemish unto God."² Paul speaks of him: "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity."³ Again he says: "The redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set

¹ Heb. 2 : 17.

² Heb. 9 : 14.

³ Titus 2 : 14.

forth to be propitiatory.”⁴ In the opening sentences of Galatians occur these words: “Our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins”;⁵ and a little later it is added: “The Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me.”⁶ In the Epistle to Titus, Paul speaks also of: “Our Saviour Jesus Christ who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity.”⁷ Speaking of the love-source of this satisfaction and atonement in a person, John also, says: “He loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation of our sins.”⁸

Said we not well that the word of God is always in advance of us! Must we not come to its level where the death of Christ is not made of more importance than the Christ himself. Must not the worth of his death be found in him, rather than his worth be found in it? Was it not that he gave satisfaction to the Father in his death, rather than that death itself gave satisfaction in him to the Father? Is not the personal point of view a deliverance from the pagan interpretations of the nature of the atonement and the means of the divine satisfaction in it?

II. The substance of the atonement is Christ; and hence, his death has an essential place as the means by which he became the atonement. His risen life has also an essential place in the mediation of atonement. He was the concrete, personal, righteous-

⁴ Rom. 3 : 24, 25.

⁵ Gal. 1 : 4.

⁶ Gal. 2 : 20.

⁷ Titus 2 : 14.

⁸ 1 John 4 : 10.

ness who died unto the death of sin and now lives unto the life of God in man. Some have preferred to state the substance of the atonement in the terms of abstract love, grace, righteousness, or holiness. The person of Christ includes and embodies all these. Since the term atonement is fundamentally ethical, we do well to state its substance as the original ethic of a divine personality. The substance of the atonement may be partially described in the language of the lower realms of truth; yet it cannot be adequately expressed except in the person of the Living Atonement.

The deepest word in the realm of religion is life; in the social realm is love; in the ethical realm is right; and in the realm of life itself is person. Truth in abstract is a reservoir with many faucets, and these may be arranged by different minds in different orders, one above the other; but the same truth flows through them all. To the one to whom the social is most important, the atonement will seem to find its ultimate necessity in the love of God; to the one to whom the ethical is the greatest, in the righteousness of God; to the one to whom the spiritual is greatest, in the holiness of God. Personal truth is the deepest of the deep, and without which all the other forms are reduced to empty abstractions.

III. Mechanical creeds and magical salvation go together. They will go together to oblivion. They

are on the road there now. They cannot go too fast. A mechanical interpretation of the atonement says that it was finished on the cross. Of course, everything depends upon the sense in which it is said to be finished. It is true it was finished on Calvary, but instrumentally only. It is anything but finished without being received by those for whom it was made; and it is anything but complete apart from Christ in whom it resides and consists, and who is its power and substance. It is unfortunate that his atonement has often been presented in a way that made it the foe of Christ himself. Some successors of Paul, in profession, if not in understanding, instead of preaching "Christ and him crucified," have too often preached "The crucifixion, and that of Christ." The doctrine of a finished atonement loses its moral content and saving power when presented in such a way that it dispenses with the living Redeemer, for its personal mediation is really the consummation of the atonement.

There could be no atonement without a mediator of it; and there could be no mediator without an atonement which he mediated. *A theory of the atonement is defective in proportion as it makes possible the separation of the atonement from him who made it, and from those for whom it was made.* A personal theory of the atonement guards these points, prevents such misconceptions, and shows the relation of the atonement to human experience. It also sets forth the Christ in his resurrection as

necessary to the atonement as the Christ in his death. In him who is the atonement is stored up all its ethical merit and spiritual power. The atonement is available in the risen Christ and effective in human experience. It is Christ who imparts all its benefits. In that sense at least he is THE LIVING ATONEMENT.

According to the law that any one is greater than his words or acts, the Christ is greater than his death. Atonement in an act is less than atonement in a person. The death of Christ was atonement, in that it made Christ the atonement. Jesus made atonement by the cross, because the cross made atonement in him. It was not so much that Jesus made atonement by his death, as that his death made him the atonement. We may rob either the cross of its Christ, or the Christ of his cross. The one is as bad as the other. As long as the cross remains the symbol of personal atonement in Christ, may no word be written to divert its esteem, deflect its power, lessen its merit, or dim the luster of its glory.

Lord, grudging thee the bitter bliss of all thy woe,
Men rob thee of thy cross,
That landing-place for sin-wrecked souls,
That place where God put forth alone with sin,
And plunged it in the depths of his own blood.

XII

THE NECESSITY OF ATONEMENT

THE atonement has satisfied both the love and the righteousness of God—his love, by being a way for the recovery and salvation of man; his righteousness, by vanquishing sin within the sinner, and vindicating the authority of the eternal Will. By setting forth Christ Jesus as propitiatory, through faith in his blood, God has shown forth his righteousness in the remission of sins, and proved himself “just while the justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus.” The ends of God in the atonement are those of the regal Paternity—the creation of an obedient and happy universe. If these ends are represented as the glory of God, it means that the one thing which can glorify a good God is the good of his creatures; if, as the salvation of man, it means that the happiness of the universe is the beatitude of the Creator. The atonement is, therefore, the creation of grace—does not create it. . . This atonement, in the degree that it exhibits God as a Being who does not need to be appeased or moved to mercy, but who suffers unto sacrifice that he may save, must have exalted in the eyes of all created intelligences his character and majesty.

—*Principal A. M. Fairbairn, D. D.*

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE NECESSITY OF ATONEMENT

No man is able to realize all the wrong of sin, and no man is qualified to decide upon the measure of necessity for its atonement. We have never looked upon sin except as sinners. A never-failing effect of sin is the lessening of ability to see things as God sees them. The sinner is infinitely removed from knowing all that a righteous and holy God feels and thinks about sin. God must, therefore, instruct us as to the necessity, the extent, and the form of the atonement. As Doctor Simon says:

God alone can reveal the divine view of sin. God alone can enable man to see and appreciate it. God alone can enable man to bear it. God alone can present, as one may put it, his bill of claims, and God alone can enable man to understand it.¹

As we are thus shut up and dependent upon the word of God, we may thankfully inquire what it has to say on the matter. There is no doubt that the New Testament uniformly sets forth Christ and his death as vitally related to the remission of sins. From the cry of John the Baptist: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh (or beareth) away the

¹ "Reconciliation by Incarnation," p. 196.

sin of the world,"² to the final statement of the Apostle John: "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world,"³ there is but one thought and testimony on this matter.

The Lord's own teaching as to the necessity of his death, comes out in the expressions: "Gave his life a ransom for many," "My blood poured out unto the remission of sins." He repeatedly used the language of necessity in speaking of his death.⁴ Through death he was enabled to "give himself for our sins." The necessity of his death is also referred to in the following words: "But now once at the end (consummation) of the ages hath he been manifested unto the abolition of sin by his sacrifice."⁵ The word "abolition," though a noun in the original, is translated as a verb (to put away) in both the Authorized and the Revised versions. The same word occurs in another place in this epistle, in which it refers to the annulment of a commandment.⁶ Surely what this passage expresses, the abolishment of sin, is the primal necessity of the atonement.

I. The necessity of the atonement may be considered under three heads, practical, essential, and relational. The last of these will be taken up in the next chapter. There is the necessity in the work of

² John 1 : 29.

³ 1 John 2 : 2.

⁴ Cf. John 3 : 13; Mark 8 : 24; Matt. 26 : 54; Luke 24 : 26, 46.

⁵ Heb. 9 : 26.

⁶ Heb. 7 : 18.

the atonement, the necessity of its existence, and the necessity of the relations out of which it grows. There is, of course, no hard and fast line of separation between these phases. The history of redemption is itself a proclamation of the practical essentials of the atonement. Christ and his death are thus announced as the means required. This is historical fact, not theory. In such necessity of work there are needed instrument, power, contact, and sacrifice. Each of these may be taken up in order.

The instrument must, of course, be personal. Not only so, it must be a divine and human person. The necessity for this may be realized when we take into account the range or extent of sin's existence and its wrong. The instrument must be in keeping with the work to be done. As truly as the agent in creation could not be less than a divine person, so with the atonement. This was a recreation far more difficult and costly than creation. The instrument is to be in perfect fitness to right the wrong of sin, and therefore must work within the realm of human life. To become an effective instrument, in the heavy task of atonement, the divine person must undergo the self-limitation of incarnation, and of identification with sin.

The kind of power needed is determined by the spiritual, moral, and personal nature of the atonement. It must be proportionate to the work to be done. Atonement can be effected only by that which

is naturally stronger than sin. Strong as sin is in killing the good, there is need of a good which is stronger still in killing sin. There is the necessity of a power which is greater in making satisfaction to God than that of sin in giving him displeasure. There is the need of that which can break sin's enchantments, unmask its illusions, overcome its perversions, and create inveterate hatred and repulsion toward it. A strength is needed which can snatch the bleeding child of humanity from the tiger-jaws and slay the man-eater. There is the necessity for no less than the right arm of divine energy which alone can cut away the tentacles of this octopus of iniquity. That power of deity is needed, which can disentangle the "Laocoon Group" of humanity from evil's reptile toils, and grind under its heel every serpent head of sin.

The necessity of efficient contact is met in the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ. The wrong of sin being within human and divine experience, it was necessary to have a person who combined both. The Son of God, therefore became the Son of man, entering structurally, organically, into the life of humanity. Since the wrongs of sin, piled heaven high, have their foundation and realization in human experience, they could be undermined and swept away only as there was such entrance into human life. Further, only the Son of God is sufficiently in contact with God the Father, and with the wrong done him to realize and right

that wrong. Only He who "became flesh" and "was made sin" could make full atonement. Christ, in his person and experience, met the necessity of direct, efficient contact with the wrong of sin, and of bringing to bear upon it the infinite moral energy stored up in a divine person.

There is always necessity of sacrifice in practical affairs. All work is the laying of self and life on the altar of toil. The work of the atonement was the laying of the person and life of the Son of God on the altar of sacrifice. The measure of sacrifice in any work depends upon what other lines of activity are open, for whom the work is done, and its personal cost in time, pain, humiliation, self-giving, and self-limitation. As there was preparatory contact in the incarnation, so was there also preparatory sacrifice. One sacrifice always prepares the way for another until the absolute is reached, and it was in the atonement. The withdrawal from the creating and governing of the world and the stepping down from the realm of the infinite to that of the finite, from the purely spiritual into that of the physical, were sacrifices preparatory to sinking to the lower and infinitely more humiliating plane of suffering, self-giving, and self-sacrificing in crucifixion as sin-bearer.

In the sacrifice of the atonement it was necessary for Christ to come into personal contact with the hideousness, and unutterable loathsomeness of iniquity; to surrender forever his divine being as the

antidote of sin, and his life to the extermination of it, tracking down its wrongs and giving himself as their rectification. The extent of his sacrifice was not so much the suffering and the humiliation of the cross as it was the state and place in which the cross put him. It was not merely six hours of unutterable agony; it was a sacrifice then begun that must go on to the last moment of eternity.

By means of his death, Christ became the adequate sacrifice for sin. Then the greater overwhelmed the less. Sin's insistent wrong was drowned in the outpour of divine life. At Calvary the devastating flames of iniquity were met and stayed by the greater blaze of the consuming fire of God's love for the lost. There on the world's altar the divine flame "purged off the baser fire victorious."

II. The necessity of existence is the second phase to be examined. As the atonement is divine in origin, the necessity of its existence is the divine person who made, rather became it. It is that which is necessary to the existence of atonement, not that which is necessary to God's existence, with which we have to do. The latter would be an impossible subject for us. Harnack says:

We should be absolutely at the end of our tether if we were to indulge in speculation as to the necessity which can have compelled God to require such a sacrificial death.⁷

⁷ "What is Christianity?" p. 169.

On the other hand, if we can in no measure apprehend this necessity, we never may consider the atonement in its relation to God at all. For example, we know at least that this necessity did not arise from the need of mediation between the different parts of the divine nature. The atonement is made a ridiculous bewilderment when it is presented as that by which God reconciles one part of his nature with another, recoups by sacrifice his loss by sin, and repays himself for all his suffering on account of it by adding still more pain for himself. Men feel to-day that all such presentations of the divine nature in making atonement are morbid and mechanical. The old water-tight-compartment psychology was in the main to blame for such views. God's love making atonement to his righteousness, his grace to his holiness, his mercy to his justice, were statements grounded in the belief that there were difficulties within the divine nature, which thus needed bridging over.

That outworn psychology is largely a thing of the past. *God's nature is a unity with which even sin cannot interfere.* His love is not separable from his holiness; his justice could not conflict with his grace; his love is as righteous as his justice; his grace is as holy as his holiness; and his mercy is as just as his righteousness. His righteousness is the righteousness of love and grace; his love and grace are the love and grace of perfect holiness. The parts of God's nature are not self-centered,

working in separate, independent sections. His justice, righteousness, and love are not each a self-consciousness seeking its own separate satisfaction.

Parts of man's nature are in conflict with each other because of the derangement of sin within. We must not suppose that God is in a similar sorry plight. Even in human nature there is no understanding of one part when isolated from the rest. This the ripest psychology of the day teaches us. Righteousness in God or in man needs something to go with it, which is righteous. Holiness in separation ceases to be holiness. Holiness which in cave or in monastery, secluded itself from the needs of human life, was too imperfect to illustrate holiness in God or in man. That is true righteousness which rushes to the conflict with unrighteousness. That alone is absolute holiness which fights to the death the unholiness of sin. The more perfect holiness is, the nearer must it press to sin, and the more must it close up with it in the battle of extermination. The holiness which withdraws, is either afraid of itself or is beaten. Holiness in God pictured as shrinking away from humanity unless appeased, is a caricature. Bishop Brooks says in one of his imperishable sermons :

Go up close to the world and help it; feel for its wickedness; pity it; sacrifice yourself for it, so shall you be surest not to sacrifice yourself to it. . . If you have a friend who is dishonest or impure, the surest way to save yourself from him, is to try and save him. More pure

and more secure in purity than the Pharisee man or woman who draws back the spotless skirts from the reach of the poor fallen creature who clutches at them, is the pitying man or woman who, in nearest brotherhood or sisterhood, goes close to the wretched sinner and takes him by the hand to lift him up.⁸

That is not absolute holiness which can do nothing about sin unless first appeased. That is not absolute justice which knows only how to condemn. True righteousness will seek the restoration of the unrighteous. God has vindicated his righteousness and holiness as completely in saving sinners as in condemning sin. All his nature goes out to fallen man; he is fatherly all the way through. All his nature goes out in condemnation of sin, demanding its death and the righting of its wrong. He is also righteous all the way through. The atonement is not an appeasement of one recalcitrant portion of the divine nature by another.

III. Let us avoid the other extreme of denying that the atonement was a satisfaction to the divine nature. There is nothing which God or man does that does not affect them. Primarily the atonement was not for the sake of mere effect upon God or man. *An atonement designed merely for moral influence is without moral immanence.* An atonement, the primal necessity of which is moral influence upon God, is little better than one, the primal necessity of which is moral influence upon man. *The necessity of the*

⁸ "Sermons," First Series, p. 189.

atonement was primarily to meet the moral and spiritual situation caused by sin. Creation was not for the sake of its effect upon God; yet it had effect upon him. One cannot think of anything which an unselfish, perfect God would do primarily for effect upon himself. Nevertheless, there was Godward efficacy in the atonement. The Scriptures say so. God was propitiated; and sin was expiated. It has been said in several places of late that never more can the atonement be acceptably presented as an appeasement to God. When there is thus a conflict between the clear teaching of the Bible and ethical sense, we may rest assured that it is a case, either of mistaken ethical sense, or of the temporary effect of the transition of that sense, probably to higher ground. When this step in progress has been taken, the Scripture teaching on this subject will not be found either discredited or out of date. *The Bible is always in advance of us.* When progress in the ethical conception of appeasement has reached the point where God is thought too good to require appeasement, there is need then for an equal advance in our thinking on the ethics of appeasement. All natures, even the ethical, have their fit and rightful appeasements. The higher our ethical conception of God, the higher must be our ethical conception of the appeasement which his nature will demand.

The utter failure of advance in the ethical conception of divine appeasement is seen in the saying,

“The God who propitiates himself needs no propitiation.” The statement contradicts its own assertion. It blinks the fact that the higher the order of nature, the greater the necessity of its acting in conformity with itself. The nature of God is such that he must satisfy himself in everything that he does, and be true to himself everywhere. It would look foolish to say that God, who satisfies himself, needs no satisfaction; but this is precisely parallel to the statement we are considering. There can be no propitiation which is not satisfaction.

The Godward satisfaction of the atonement was spiritual and ethical. It was spiritual in form, but not fractionally so, for it was satisfaction, not to one part as furnished by another, but to all of the divine nature. It was satisfaction to the entire spiritual being of God. His holiness was not appeased by his love; for that assumes that his love loved what his holiness condemned, and hence was wanting in righteousness. *Holiness is the abstract of perfect personality; God's holiness is his spiritual wholeness as deity.* That which satisfied his holiness satisfied not part of his nature, but the wholeness of his spirit and nature and being. There was no part of God's nature which did not receive satisfaction in what was done for sin's undoing, and for the establishment of righteousness, love, goodness, and holiness in man. Let us remember that there is a world of difference between the love of sin and the love of a sinner. The one is all impure, and

springs from unholiness; the other is all pure and springs from holiness.

The satisfaction of God was ethical also in substance. The moral values and substance lost by sin were made good by the atonement. The ethical structure impaired by iniquity was relaid in foundation and rebuilt in glorious pattern and permanence by the atonement. The righteousness of the atonement satisfied the whole moral nature of God by enabling it in its entirety to enter into normal relations with man. What was lost in ethical righteousness to the moral world because of sin, was balanced by an ethical equivalent in the righteousness of Christ's redemption. *It was an ethical satisfaction, because God was more satisfied in what he gave in the atonement than in what he received.* Ethical nature never sacrifices for the sake of right, without being more satisfied therein than by any other means. Righteousness and love never make right at their own cost for the sinful yet beloved, without being more deeply propitiated thereby than they could be in any other way. The greatest divine satisfaction of the atonement was in giving rather than in receiving. Even with God and atonement it is "more blessed to give than to receive." This is how it happened that God could propitiate himself.

It was not suffering as such which satisfied God in the atonement, for that would render it unethical. Suffering cannot be an end in the satisfaction of

God. It is a means only when no other will do. It was the end attained by means of the suffering that reached the heart of the divine. The suffering of the atonement was the pain of immaculate holiness in cleansing human guilt, and of infinite righteousness and love pressing through the finite to the infinite beyond. While no doubt God is pleased that sin should be such to him that it must cause him suffering, yet such suffering may not belong to the atonement itself. It is at this point that there is much confusion. The effect of the atonement is stated as its cause, and the effect of sin upon the divine nature is looked upon as the effect of the atonement itself. It is at this point ~~that there is~~ that it is a burden which causes suffering to God. That is an added wrong. Two wrongs do not make a right. The age-long suffering of God on account of human sin cannot be called its atonement; it is its lasting disgrace and infinite crime.

The divine satisfaction in atonement was also personal. There are several realms in which both divine and human satisfaction and possession are possible, and in ascending scale of worth. They are the material, the mental, the moral, and the personal. *Since our dearest and highest possessions are personal, thence may come our greatest pain or pleasure, our greatest sorrow or satisfaction.* When Paul said, "That I might win Christ," he referred to the highest realm of possession, and to the highest person who may be possessed. The Father and all

else are in Christ possessed, or lost. One cannot fitly measure by even the best human standards, the power of the persons of the Trinity to give satisfaction to one another. The Son, in his great work of creation, gave satisfaction to the Father and to the Spirit. In his twofold personal relationship to the Father and to men, Christ was fitted to give a fuller divine satisfaction in the greater work of redemption. × What Jesus was in personal relation to God and man explains the heart of the satisfaction of the atonement. Deep as the depth of divine personality was the satisfaction which Christ rendered and is still rendering to the Father. It is a shoreless ocean whose unbounded fulness, measureless expanse, and fathomless deeps are known only to him who made it, and to him to whom it was given.

The fitness of the Christ for the work of creation was at the same time his fitness for the work of redemption. He could create to the glory of the Father; and therefore he must do so. He could sacrifice himself to the far greater glory of God in the world's redemption; and therefore he felt the necessity so to do. In that fathomless mystery of the Trinity, the Son was the necessity of creating and to creation. If we could know why this was so, we would then know fully why he was the necessity for making atonement, and to the making of atonement. He was the Person of the Deity fitted by his power of self-limitation to reach that utmost point

of sacrifice, the absolute and infinite, in giving himself to be the atonement for sin.

The atonement is Deity filling the deepest need of humanity. In redemption Christ subdues all things unto God, and meets the deepest necessity of the whole universe. At the creation the morning stars sang together; at the redemption of the world the Sun of Righteousness arose upon it. By the Living Atonement the estranged was reconciled, the Father satisfied, the lost saved, and the storm on life's sea hushed into everlasting quiet.

All things grow sweet in him,
In him are all things reconciled.
All fierce extremes
That beat along time's shore
Like chidden waves grow mild,
And creep to kiss his feet.

XIII

FATHERHOOD, FORGIVENESS, AND
ATONEMENT

ON the one hand, Christianity, by this filial union with God, is seen to be the ideal and perfect religion; on the other, it appears as a real fact in the consciousness of Jesus Christ. . . . What can men have in the shape of life superior to the life of perfect and reciprocal affection—God giving himself to man, and realizing in him his paternity; man giving himself to God without fear, and realizing in him his humanity? Is not religious evolution accomplished when these two terms, God and man, opposed to each other at the origin of conscious life on earth, interpenetrate each other till they reach the moral unity of love, in which God becomes interior to man and lives in him, in which man becomes interior to God, and finds in God the full expansion of his being? Christianity is therefore the absolute and final religion of mankind.

—*Auguste Sabatier.*

THE necessity of not in any way rending the fabric of ethical obligations by the going forth of forgiveness, is further emphasized by the fact that sin is recognized through an aroused conscience. The moral sense once awakened cannot be allayed by any method which comes short of satisfying its insistent demands. Forgiveness must be in harmony with the moral sentiments, or it is not forgiveness.

—*Charles Allen Dinsmore.*

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

FATHERHOOD, FORGIVENESS, AND ATONEMENT

THE importance and character of anything may in some measure be judged by the importance and character of its relations—the relations out of which it grows and in which it works. As to the atonement, Fatherhood is a relation out of which it grows, and forgiveness a relation in which it works. In fuller measure the relations of the atonement are the social, moral, and spiritual relations, involving the existence of sin within them. The spiritual is the foundational and extensive, the social is the structural, and the ethical is the qualitative of the other two. Since the atonement is the work of God, its relations find their origin in his relations to man and to sin.

I. The atonement did not in anywise change *the relation of God to sin*; rather, it made it manifest. There is no atonement that could change the divine estimate of sin, which would not thereby undo itself. An atonement would need to be atoned for, which condoned sin. What it did change was the line of active relations between God and sin. So, we may say, the atonement was a revelation of the unalter-

able divine attitude to sin, and of the price which God was willing to pay for its destruction. Nowhere else is this estimate so fully expressed. Christ's cries of agony on the cross uttered everlasting verdict upon iniquity. Calvary stands forever as the supreme court judgment seat where final sentence upon sin was pronounced by the Judge of all the earth. The heart of sin, as well as the heart of God, was there laid bare. Sin manifested its immutable innermost in crucifying Jesus Christ. Its unalterable enmity to righteousness, holiness, goodness, unselfishness, and love made there the clearest and strongest declaration of itself.

The changed relation of divine activity was due to the institution of a new relation of a divine person to sin, in which the deepest resources of God's nature were called into play. The Immutable had waited for "the fulness of time" in which to change the expression of his relation to sin to one of fulness and perfection. Jesus Christ, "the same yesterday, yea to-day, and forever," expressed completely by his atonement the changed and the changeless divine relations to sin. Because of what sin means to him and to the moral universe of which he is the head and heart, God must fight this enemy to the death, and right its wrong.

II. In the relations of the atonement we now come to *the relation of God to man*. Every created thing is given in its creation the law of its being, in which

are inherently determined the relations in which it should exist. God decided the nature of his relations to man by the nature which he gave him. In creating him a moral being, he instituted a set of moral relations to him. It was man, not moral law, that he made. The old view of decretal moral law was wrong. Such laws are not made. Laws are. Moral laws, including the law of atonement, are as uncreated as God himself. When there is a change in the moral relations between God and man, it is according to moral possibility. The latent in moral life, not the new in moral law, is brought into activity.

Moral possibility is downward, as well as upward; otherwise it would not be moral. Degeneration must be possible; it is immoral, not unmoral. There could be no right if wrong were impossible. Non-existence is implied in existence, and non-being in being. There is nothing made for which everything is good, for that would deny the law of its being. There is nothing made, the unmaking of which is not possible, unless conserved in the being of God. The loss of existence-relation to God would be a reversal of the law of being. For all created things existence is made possible by being true to the law of their existence-relation to God. In complex natures there is the possibility of part of their natures being undone, as is the case when the body dies. The moral, like the physical, may, from its very nature, be abused, ruined, and

undone. May not this be the case in regard to those finally lost; namely, that they are morally wholly undone? Must not what still remains hold true to the law of unmoral being in God, or be undone also? Perhaps moral development requiring the conflict with the anti-moral, involves the possibility of the lost, filling some such place in a non-moral existence. Even an anti-moral being must, in some way, be an existence in God; otherwise it would lose existence. These are deep matters, and may seem to involve contradictions, if not absurdities. It is easy here to get tangled in the web of one's own thinking. Nevertheless, immortality must be rooted in integral relation to God. He cannot give to anything or any one an existence independent of and entirely outside of his own. Nothing is immortal, except by the law of its being in and relation to God. Where this line of thinking leads to, will be determined by the law of mental compulsion. It need not land in a non-moral monism or an impersonal pantheism. An immortality, apart from that of God, may be left to the discussions of metaphysicians.

III. *The normal relation of God to man is that of Father.* This grows out of what God and man are to each other in moral, social, and spiritual being. There is nothing else that may be named in which the Fatherhood of God could be grounded. Fatherhood combines in its content as a term the perfect

adjustment of the social and the ethical. There are those who hold that God can be Father to men only as they are in Christ; thus sharing in his Sonship relation to the Father. This would narrow the natural and direct Fatherhood of God exclusively to Christ. It is true that originally by the Son, and in him, all Sonship came into being. *He is the pattern and prototype of humanity, and of sonship.* Both creational and redemptional sonship have precisely the same origin in Christ.

We may note that the substance of this original Sonship of Christ himself is ethical as well as social; and a perfect balance of the social and the ethical must have been characteristic of that original or creational sonship of man in Christ. It is true that now in man's abnormal state he cannot enter into sonship relation with the Father, except through the Son; but the same was true in the beginning. A latent human sonship is revealed in the very possibility of Christ's saving men unto it; otherwise Christ himself could not have been incarnated into humanity, and awakened men to sonship by the power of his own. We were created in sonship in Christ, and redeemed in sonship in the Son. The view that divine sonship is not latent in and normal to humanity, is like the old view that religious powers are imparted, not awakened, at conversion. The moral and social natures are already in man before his regeneration, and are there waiting for their adjustment in divine sonship. The

harmonious interdependence of the moral and the social nature is the very image and likeness of God; but it is so because it is then inhabited by, interfused with, and controlled by means of, the Spirit of the Father. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

That the Fatherhood of God is normal in the relation which he bears to man, is denied also on the ground that the divine Fatherhood is a figure of speech. There is no divine mother; hence the Father is but a metaphor. This is pure pedantry. The classification of the form of an expression used is not a nullification of the truth it conveys. The classification may be very arbitrary. Truth expressed by a figure is as real and as definite as that expressed by a word. Nearly all our words began their history as figures of speech. The term language itself was originally the metaphor of the tongue. We still speak of our mother-tongue. Why not object that there is in reality no language, because we do not also speak of our father-tongue? In the course of usage the figure passes over into the term; but the thing designated has not changed.

Fatherhood is the unchanged fact, whether the word designating it be classed as figure, or term, or name. We know the earthly first, and therefore call the heavenly Fatherhood the figure. Growing up in the moral and spiritual relations, the earthly tends to become more of the figurative, and the heavenly the foundation term. Fatherhood is a heavenly

term with an earthly meaning. It is not so much, therefore, an earthly term with a heavenly meaning, as it is the reverse. Mere sex description of fatherhood or motherhood does not reach the heart of the matter in their social, moral, and spiritual character. This refers to the initial begetting only. There is a higher which follows. The essential substance in either is the imparting life and the likeness of God. The list of genealogy in the Gospel of Luke ends, "which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God." Fathers and mothers are transmitters of, and links in the imparted life of the Father in heaven. *God is our Father*. Satan's children are every one stolen from him. The devil made and gave life to none of them; he unmade them. He is the great kidnapper and child-thief of the moral universe. Christ is "the Only Begotten"; we are the only begetting. We are becoming sons. God is more and more begetting himself in us, in a progressive sonship. Christ is "the Only Begotten" because he is the perfected infinite begetting of God the Father. We may be "begotten anew."

IV. Every man is, by reason of the spiritual structure of his being, a growing son of the Most High. Why does he not always realize the natural benefit of his birthright? Because the spiritual disposition which should correspond with this structure, and is the active force in social relationship, may be abnormal. It may claim the social rights and privi-

leges without fulfilling the ethical obligations. In the main, experience is made up of a continuous twofold reaction between disposition and structure, and between the social and the ethical. There is also the reaction of environment. The social nature compels man to reach out, for it is essentially sensitive to surroundings. When it has taken in that which disagrees with the moral nature and interferes with the social relations, sin has entered.

Man wronged his Father by entering into a false relationship with that which is naturally opposed to the divine Fatherhood. He could do so only voluntarily. The wrong meant that he willed contrary to the known will of the Father, and therefore did not want the Father in heaven to be a father to him. Once this took place, the disposition of sonship was lost; and his experience was then characterized by the spirit of that which the soul preferred to God. The disposition which intuitively willed the will of the Father, no longer had the soul to itself. Because man is a moral being and not a machine, he may enter upon an experience not represented in the original ethical quality of his being. Because he is a moral being, he cannot escape moral obligations in choosing a false alliance. A disposition to break the false alliance may take possession of him, and a sense of the injury to God and self may be exercised. To right the wrong, it is necessary that the meaning of, and the responsibility for, the injury to God be realized on the part of the

sinner, and that a purpose of reparation possess the soul. As Doctor Simon puts it:

The impulse of the offender ought to be to make up for his shortcomings and misdoings, even as the impulse of the righteous is to render service and glory to the name of his God.¹

While there is nothing in the moral nature of man to prevent a change of disposition, there is everything in the nature of sin to cause this possibility to be farther and farther removed. As there is no isolated evil, to be stronger than any evil is to be stronger than all evil. Man's power of resistance had already proved itself not so great as that of sin's aggressiveness. It is clear that man of himself cannot break away from the stronger power which has bound him, rectify the wrong of his sin, and make himself right with God. Sin so enervates and enslaves him, that he cannot reverse the process of his sinful experience, the trend of which is then farther and farther away from response to the good and atonement for the bad. No man has been able to exterminate from his experience the sin-life. No man has subdued the sin-power which took him captive. There is no human experience free from sin; and no man has made atonement for it. *From the manward end of this relation there is then absolutely no hope.*

This renders the necessity for divine intervention

¹ "Reconciliation by Incarnation," p. 196.

in an atonement all the greater, if the divine creation is to be saved from proving worse than failure. God knew all that would be involved in his relation to man before he made him. He knew what would happen. He knew what evil had already done, and that he could not exclude it from the earth and man be man. Man's moral existence rendered it impossible to save him from conflict with evil. God could create innocence, but not character. Contest with evil is the creator of moral character. Man had not learned to resist; and the cunning seductiveness of sin made it fatally easy to yield. In such circumstances God, in his fatherliness, felt the necessity of doing what he could. *He was as much attacked as man. The contest was his as well as man's. His relations were at stake.* The strength of righteousness, and love, in the divine Fatherhood being able to kill the evil, he must have felt responsibility as well as desire to right the wrong. Sin took advantage of the weak end of the relation between God and man; and man was unable to help himself or to right the wrong. The Father, therefore, took up the problem; otherwise the divine relation would have been a solitary gleam of light, then total obscuration in the darkness of a night that would know no morning. The sonship of man, not the Fatherhood of God, was mastered by sin. Iniquity demonstrated how deep was the atoning resourcefulness of the divine relation. Divine Fatherhood is, therefore, a firmament set not only with glittering

stars of Providence, but also with the central sun of Redemption.

V. The forgiveness of sin bears no relation whatever to the atonement, except to show it unnecessary. This expresses the thought of some on this matter. They reason as follows: In a moral world, forgiveness of wrong is basal, and its sole condition is repentance of the wrongdoer. On this basis alone does God forgive; he needs no help of atonement to forgive. To remit sin on the basis of something which he himself has done, would be to act out of harmony with the moral world. If atonement makes right the wrong, forgiveness is then not needed. These two, atonement and forgiveness, are mutually exclusive.

In reply, it may be said that forgiveness is not the real basis of the moral world. There is that in this world which is basal to forgiveness itself, for there are circumstances where forgiveness would be a crime. To owe money may not be a wrong, and to pay it may not be atonement; but to seek to defraud the creditor is wrong; and to repent, ask forgiveness, and pay the debt, shows that in this case there is room for forgiveness, along with atonement. If there is refusal to make good the injury or loss, forgiveness is out of place. Faith in atonement therefore, accompanies and even lies at the basis of faith in forgiveness. Repentance and forgiveness do not meet the whole ethical necessity. A moral

wrong always lies deeper than the human relations. When David wakened to the deeper meaning of his sin, he said: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." The test of genuine repentance is readiness to make reparation or to accept atonement by another where reparation on the part of the wrong-doer is impossible. Very little can man do in making right the wrong of his sin. He can repent of it, with the help of God's Spirit. Since the spirit of repentance is itself a divine gift, God forgives on the basis of something which he himself has done, when he accepts repentance. God may give repentance only to those to whom he may give the benefit of his atonement. Power of repentance is lost when faith in the extermination of wrong by means of atonement, is gone.

Try what repentance can: what can it not?
Yet what can it; when one cannot repent?
O wretched state! O bosom, black as death!
O limed soul, that, struggling to be free,
Art more engag'd.²

If a son has contracted a bad habit, and the evil too strong for him has thus fastened itself upon him, forgiveness of his wrong to the father does not meet the latter's problem of his son's release. This is similar to the case with sin—it is *too strong for us*. Forgiveness alone would not meet the problem of our release. Wrong is blotted out, not in forgiveness

² "Hamlet," Act III, Scene 3.

alone, but in forgiveness and atonement. Each has its place; and atonement cannot take the place of forgiveness, rendering the latter unnecessary; nor can forgiveness take the place of atonement, rendering reparation unnecessary.

It is not well to put the forgiveness of God and that of man on the same level. The wrong to God is always infinitely greater and his forgiveness carries with it much wider relations than that of man. It is not that God is unwilling and needs the help of atonement to forgive; it is rather that atonement fulfils his purpose of making forgiveness effectual. Because atonement is a necessity to divine forgiveness, we must not assume that atonement meets a lack in the divine willingness to forgive. Prayer is a necessity to Christian life, and to much of God's giving. Because men must pray in order to receive from him, God is not therefore unwilling to give. As Bishop Brooks said: "Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance; it is taking hold on his willingness." So atonement is not God overcoming his implacability; it is the expression of his grace. As prayer is none the less a necessity, but all the more so because of God's willingness to give, so atonement is none the less a necessity, but all the more so because of God's willingness to forgive.

True forgiveness is never without cost to the forgiving one. In the case of the divine forgiveness, its cost is expressed in the divine atonement. Once men believed in fiat creation. God spake the word,

and, magically, the worlds sprang into existence and leaped to their orbits in space. Now it is believed that creation was a patient work involving countless long ages of divine thought and toil. Geology, in its book of stony pages, tells the fascinating story of what creation cost God. That is but one side of the matter, and the less important. How much of himself it was necessary for God to put into his created world, who can tell? The bestowal of his immanence is the larger part of what creation cost God.

There are those who believe in what might be called "fiat forgiveness." They are as far behind the times as those who still believe in fiat creation. Each case furnishes a cheap and unworthy view of God and his work. It cost God infinitely more to be where he could forgive sin, than it did to lay the rock-ribbed structure of earth, and form and fashion the whole universe. Forgiveness cost the atonement; and the atonement cost a far greater measure of self-limitation and immanence than did the creation of the world.

As there are conditions to be met on man's side before forgiveness may be obtained, so on the divine side also. Charles Allen Dinsmore refers to this when he says:

But surely there are certain conditions to be fulfilled before forgiveness can flow from God to man. For these conditions, the work of Jesus provided. He set forth the chief factors which enter into pardon—love, holiness, sin

—in their true nature. He wrought a work in our interest, as it were, outside of us, without which God could not have consistently forgiven us.³

The responsibility which God must assume in forgiving human sin, is measured by the sacrifice of his Son. The appeal to the parable of the Prodigal Son to prove that forgiveness is conditioned on man's side only, is of no avail. Principal J. G. Simpson well says:

But it is obvious that even the parable of the Prodigal Son would not ring true in human ears, unless it was forever interpreted by a transaction which gives due weight to the enormity of a sin that entailed the sacrifice of the Father's only Son.⁴

Atonement is the larger ethical problem of which forgiveness is a minor part. As the Old Testament was the pledge of the New, and the revelation of the prophets the pledge of that in Christ, so all divine forgiveness was the pledge of the utmost that God could do in meeting the whole necessity created by sin. Any act of divine righteousness and love is the pledge of all possible divine activity. God's forgiveness of sin was the pledge of the atonement; and the atonement was the measure of his forgiveness. Was that not implied in what Paul once wrote? He said:

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be

³ "Atonement in Literature and Life," p. 207.

⁴ "Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels," art. "Atonement."

propitiatory, through faith in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might be just and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.⁶

⁶ Rom. 3 : 24-26.

XIV

THE IDENTIFICATION OF CHRIST
WITH SIN

THE difficulty of discovering a theory of the Atonement that shall command general assent is very great. But however great the difficulty is, we know that we must have a theory of the Atonement. We cannot think without it. We cannot hope, and we cannot pray without it. It is not enough to know that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. It is necessary to bring his death and our sins into contact by some working theory of the Atonement.

—*Expository Times, August, 1909.*

WHEN I am asked for a theory of the Atonement, I ever reply that, in the mighty movement, the Lord himself said "Why?" And if he asked that question, I dare not imagine that I can ever explain the deep central varieties of this mystery and pain. Men stand outside the circle of that incomprehensible agony; they behold him forsaken of God, at the uttermost issue of sin, in the deepest profundities of sorrow, in the mystery of an awful silence; and all this as they hear him say, "My God." Let there be no attempt to penetrate further into that hallowed and awful realm; and yet the subject of the sufferings of Christ cannot be so left.

—*G. Campbell Morgan, D. D.*

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE IDENTIFICATION OF CHRIST WITH SIN

ALL spiritual processes are difficult to apprehend. Their profound meaning and subtle nature baffle exhaustive investigation. The higher their order within the realm of experience the harder is it to grasp the secret of the inner principle at work. Especially is this applicable to the atonement. All of its processes may not be explained in full; they may, however, be classified as active and passive, or from another point of view, as institutive and operative.

The institutive process, by which Jesus Christ became the personal atonement for sin, is the highest of all within the spiritual realm. The atonement is, in the main, a transcendent or ultranatural process in its institution. This might discourage us from attempting to understand and explain it; but we have several things to encourage and help us. First, it is in the realm of ethical experience. Though Jesus' experience transcends ours by as much as he transcends us in character and power, it is not an unsearchable mystery. The transcendent part of his ethical experience cannot contradict in moral principle that of the lower part which is parallel to our own.

God wishes us to know the utmost possible in this great subject; and we have, therefore, the help of his word and his Spirit. The deep things of God are fully known by the Spirit. "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." The Spirit and the word agree in common revelation. It is not an accident that so many facts are given us in the Scriptures as to the experience of Christ in his death. Let us be thankful for the supplementing where our limitations would have denied.

I. The preparatory experience of Gethsemane is worthy of some attention. When

Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forespent, forespent,

he realized as he had not before what suffering and sacrifice were in store for him. All previous anticipation was greatly intensified. It became the most vivid consciousness. As he stood in the chill shadow of his death, it caused him to shiver. Many meet death seemingly without fear. Better men meet "the grim monster" calmly despite tremendous fear. Why was the heroic Christ so painfully affected by his impending death? It certainly was not because of any lack in him. In part, it was because of his realizing the character of his coming death.

Jesus knew more than any what was in death; he knew best what his own death would mean; that it

would be the doorway to his self-sacrifice forever. It would be a painful birth into an endless life of self-limitation in still closer identification with humanity. It would involve the perpetuation forever of the sacrifice made in the incarnation. It would be a suffering transition, and painful emergence into a new order of subsistence with, and indwelling in, humanity. His death would make him the possession of man in a much larger way than did the incarnation. Henceforth he would have no life apart from organic union with the human race. It meant that he must forever be the life of humanity by the endless sacrifice of imparting himself to humanity.

One of the shallowest definitions of death asserts that it is a separation of soul and body. There is death where there is no soul and body to separate. We should have to be able to define life in order to define death. When it is said that life is reciprocity with environment, organic elemental replacement, performance of function, building of self-structure, and knowing according to measure of capacity the primal source of life, we have but told what life does, not what it is. In defining death, the best we can do is to say that it is the cessation of all this. The larger the life the greater the death. Life on an infinite scale involves the possibility of death on an infinite scale. In the agony on the cross the Son would cease to know life in the Father; and this would be the very essence of death to him. Sum

up, then, all that the crucifixion of the Son of God meant, and it is no wonder that the light of day turned into midnight darkness, the temple veil fell rent in twain, and the tremors of that death shook the world in earthquake convulsions.

Perhaps this preparatory process, most of all, consisted in maintaining unflinching steadfastness of willingness to be offered up in sacrifice for sin. The difficulty in doing so would be increased in proportion as Jesus realistically anticipated his coming experience as sinbearer. The utmost suffering would come to him from being plunged into personal contact with the utter loathsomeness of iniquity; and he therefore suffered terribly by anticipation of the deathly revulsion of soul he would experience on the morrow.

Gethsemane was the point in the path of saviorhood where Jesus stood for a moment or two looking down into the abyss of death. Into its bitter gloom he must now plunge. No wonder that an awful agony seized him as he stood there on the brink of death gazing into the void and taking in the full meaning of the next step! Mark says:

He began to be greatly amazed—literally, stricken with deadly horror—and sore troubled. And he said unto them, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.¹

Luke, the physician, describes the physical as well as the spiritual suffering:

¹ Mark 14 : 33, 34.

And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became, as it were, great drops of blood falling down upon the ground.²

Despite the suffering and the bitterness of the cup, the preparation of prayer and self-surrender went on unswervingly. He held perfectly true to the Father's will of man's redemption by his sacrifice. What the wilderness temptation was in preparation for his ministry, the experience of Gethsemane was to Calvary. In each case the Prince of this world came and found nothing in him.

Out of the woods my Master went,
And he was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo him last,
From under the trees they drew him last;
'T was on a tree they slew him—last,
When out of the woods he came.

II. The most remarkable saying on the cross is the one most often quoted: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It was not the only one of its kind. The tragedy closed with a similar cry: "And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit." In the space of time intervening between these two utterances, who can guess the full meaning of the experience that caused them?

² Luke 22 : 44. The expression "as it were," does not deny that his sweat really contained blood. Compare John 7 : 10: "Then went he also up, not publicly, but as it were in secret," (ὡσεὶ and ὥς.)

All the mystery of sin and of redemption are wrapped up in them.

Jesus Christ could not become personal atonement for sin by anything short of an experience of personal identification with it. Any explanation of the atonement which obscures this process must dissipate the largest part of its energy in explaining away divinely given data as to the experience of Christ during the crucifixion. It has become the fashion to urge that it is unsafe to build up a theory of the atonement on a single saying of Christ uttered on the cross. *It would be safer to do this than to build up one which to stand, must first of all prove untrue this great saying of Christ concerning the withdrawal of the Father's presence.* The personal theory of the atonement is not by any means built on a single statement of Scripture; it is shaped large enough to provide ample room for all the related statements of the word of God.

The cry of dereliction is not the only proof that Christ was experientially identified with sin as he hung on the cross; but it is an important statement of the fact, and its meaning must, therefore, be defended. Let us not be guilty of squarely contradicting these words of Christ. Let it not be said that God had not forsaken him; and was never in fact nearer him; for this would mean that his worst agony was due to hallucination; and that at least for once we knew better than he did. Never do we so need to be corrected as when we thus attempt to

correct the Christ. Never was the man born who could convince of error him who is the truth, and rectify the processes of the mind of the Lord. God may be very near, so far as space is concerned, but far off spiritually. Once Jesus and Judas were side by side in space, but infinitely far apart in spirit. Moral distances are hardest to traverse; and separated by them from loved ones, the soul drinks the cup of bitterest loneliness.

The best of men, in the very eagerness of their interest in the Son of God, are in danger of the sin of presumption. Peter was in that plight at Cæsarea Philippi. To him Christ did not say, "Peter, you are a good man; you mean well, and what you say has no doubt an element of truth in it." No! The Lord of love said something very different. We are at Cæsarea Philippi again. Like the disciples, we have been for some time in the training-school of the Master. The critical moment has come. Much depends upon whether we have apprehended that Christ's experience in inaugurating the atonement involved divine dereliction. Still more turns upon our personal attitude to him who is the world's hope, because the bearer of its sin. When he announces that he is forsaken of the Father, shall we straightway say to him? "This shall not be; this is not so." We may fear to contradict flatly these words of Christ upon the cross, and yet do that which is not so honorable, saying that what Jesus really meant was: "My God, my

God, why hast thou *metaphorically* forsaken me?" This would not merely tone down the thought of the crucified; it would travesty the most sublimely serious words that ever fell from the lips of the Saviour, and burlesque the death agony of the Son of God. He refused to be drugged. Are we thus at liberty to drug his words? If Jesus knew clearly what he was suffering, he surely knew how to express himself accurately concerning it. In his great agony it would be unnatural to fix up metaphors to describe it. The unstudied ejaculation expressed precisely what he felt and realized; or he would not have allowed it to escape from his lips. Jesus had, in his earthly life, a limitation of knowledge; but this limitation did not affect the sphere of his personal relations with the Father. His knowledge was perfect there; otherwise he could not have escaped mistake, doubt, and sin. No one could ever be in a position to instruct him as to whether the Father had really forsaken him, for no one has been in his place, nor known the closeness of divine intimacy which he did.

It does not commend itself as an example of fairness to take seriously and at full value all the other sayings on the cross, and to discredit the one now being discussed. Prof. James S. Candlish refers to this as follows:

In regard to the cry, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" I think it must be taken as expressing a truth and not merely a feeling wrung from our Saviour by agony, but

having no reality corresponding to it. That Jesus, even for a moment in the darkest hour, had a false and unworthy idea of his Father, and gave open utterance to it, seems to me inconsistent with his whole character and life, and with his other utterances from the cross. The desertion of which he speaks must be something not merely fancied, but intensely real. Nor can it be explained as simply his abandonment to the power of his enemies. If that were so, we should expect the cry to be uttered long before, not during the darkness that came over all the land.³

A more recent utterance on this point is from Doctor Mabie. He says:

True, many efforts have been made to explain away the evident force of this cry, saying it is an exaggeration due to his peculiar self-consciousness, etc.; but only at the expense of the reliability of the self-consciousness of Jesus in his supreme redeeming hour. . . To take the language as it stands involves the fewer difficulties.⁴

President Strong, in the new edition of his "Systematic Theology," says:

His cry of agony: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" was not an ejaculation of thoughtless or delirious suffering. It expressed the deepest meaning of the crucifixion. . . These explanations make Christ's sufferings and Christ's words unreal; and, to our mind, they are inconsistent with both his deity and his atonement.⁵ . . If Christ merely supposed himself to be deserted by God, "not only does Christ become an erring man and, so far as the predicate deity is applicable to

³ "Biblical World," Vol. IX, p. 95.

⁴ "The Meaning and Message of the Cross," p. 68.

⁵ "Systematic Theology," Vol. II, p. 742.

him, an erring God; but if he cherished unfounded distrust of God, how can it be possible still to maintain that his will was in abiding, perfect agreement and identity with the will of God?"⁶

If divine personality is a reality, there is the possibility of fellowship between such persons being interfered with as truly as with the human. It is not a separation from personal relation which may thus take place, but an intervening in fellowship.

While Jesus died a physical death, the direct cause of it was not physical. It is true that he had been weakened by suffering and lack of rest; but this was not sufficient to account for the exceptional swiftness of his death. He had a better body than either of the robbers crucified with him. His was the only human body that ever had a fair chance; it was the first one tenanted by a sinless soul; nevertheless, he died long before his companions in crucifixion. Unless the forsaking of which Jesus spoke was real, there is no sufficient explanation for his terrible dread in Gethsemane, and the speedy death on Calvary. Was it not that a different cause of death other than the crucifixion intervened? We are thus shut up either to hallucination or to dereliction as the primary cause of his death.

It is then a fact that the experience of the dying Son of God was spiritually different from that of others put to as painful death as far as the body was concerned. Why have the deaths of martyrs been

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 731.

so uniformly different from Christ's in respect to the sense of God's sustaining presence? If the Father had not really withdrawn, why did the perfect Christ fail to realize what imperfect men have in death? When the first of that long, long line of hero-witnesses came to his hour of doom, the heavens were opened unto him. Why were they against his Saviour in his death-hour closed in impenetrable gloom? Because the Christ bore a unique relation to sin, and consequently to the Father also; and died the unparalleled death.

III. In a study of the atonement from the personal point of view, the first fact of its process with which we have to deal is the personal identification of Christ with sin by means of the cross. Can we reasonably explain how this identifying took place? The explanation must be an experiential one. There is the difficulty that there is no perfect parallel in our own experience. Further, the Scriptures do not work out in detail the process referred to. Certain facts are related by eye-witnesses of his death. Dare we draw our inferences from them? We must, though in so doing we are perilously near the border line of human limitation. Let it be readily acknowledged that all the mysterious processes of spiritual experience, especially those of divine atonement, cannot be explained.

There are facts in all our lives which must be accepted without the explanation of the processes

lying back of them. There were four or five identification processes in the development of the saviorhood of Jesus. They were identification with human nature in the incarnation, with human sin in the atonement, with the spiritual state and body in the resurrection, with the primeval glory of God in the ascension, and with the life and person of the believer in salvation. It would be unwise to deny the fact in any case because the process back of it is obscure. We would, on that order of procedure, be compelled to deny our own existence. Try as we may to explain the process by which even our consciousness came into being, it is as great a mystery as ever. The process of the personal identification of Christ with human sin may be puzzling and profound; yet we are not willing to be kept out of this chamber of mystery. If nothing more can be done, we would fain peer through the door ajar. Let us not pretend to see very far, for the light is not the same as if the door were wide open. Some day Jesus himself will open the door for us; and we shall then enter and behold what here we partly guessed at. Thank God, we do not guess about the fact, even though we do guess somewhat about the process back of it. The fact itself does not depend upon any explanation of these processes. The explanation of how Jesus was identified with sin on the cross is not wholly indispensable to the doctrine of the atonement, just as the explanation of how Jesus rose from the dead is not absolutely

essential to the doctrine of the resurrection; yet one does feel that any measure of explanation of the process in either case would be a welcome accompaniment.

As to this matter, there are a few suggestions which may be offered. *They are not by any means given as final and complete. The transcendent is still so, when we have said all that we may about it.* First, there was the part which the Father must take in the process by which the Son was identified with sin. In some measure the former shared in bringing to pass all the experiences in the life of the Saviour. It was God the Father who determined both the nature and the time of all such processes. The Word could not have become flesh unless the Father had put forth activity to that end. The time and method of the incarnation were determined in the order of the relations and purposes of God.

Time in its fulness and space in its vastness are both contained in the being of God. He is the author of all order and place. The incarnation in some measure determined the time and method by which Christ should be identified with sin, and was itself part of the means. The divine life of the Son, including human life, must enter in order all the phases and responsibilities of human experience which lay in the path of saviorhood. He did not enter the experiences of manhood in childhood. The Father did not merely appoint the sin-bearer. He "lays upon him the iniquity of us all." As there

was the moment in which God put forth activity in the resurrection of Christ, so was there the time in which "it pleased the Lord to bruise him"; and then the Saviour—"servant" "was smitten of God and afflicted." It was the Father who "made his soul an offering for sin." "Him who knew no sin, he made sin on our behalf." When the sin of humanity became the experience of divinity in the person of Christ, the divine Father had a share in the activity which made it so.

There was also the share in this matter which the Saviour himself must take. *One factor, namely, that of Jesus' consciousness of the relation which he naturally bore to those who had sinned, may be mentioned.* Suffering always intensifies the consciousness of kinship. In the crucifixion Jesus would realize, as he never had before, his relation to humanity and what it involved in sharing the consciousness of their sin. This consciousness of relationship is powerful to identify in proportion as the one who exercises it is true to that relation.

In a home where an only daughter, sixteen years old, had been betrayed to shame, the most painful agony was that of her mother. Other mothers in the city were moving about as happy as ever in the sunlight of home. The mother of this poor girl lay prone in agony, sobbing out the most awful heartache that can come to one human being for another. This mother, because of her relation to her child, suffered as even her daughter could not.

A clergyman was fond of witnessing surgical operations. It was not that he was indifferent to human pain. As a matter of fact, he was of sympathetic disposition. The day came when he looked at his own child in the hands of the surgeon. This father would not have believed that the effect upon him could be so different, as compared with other operations he had witnessed. In this case the surgeon's knife taught him more theology in five minutes than the best seminary could have in five years. He learned by this experience that belonging to his own, involved sharing pain as readily as sharing joy. Realized relationship in the intuition of kinship and the consciousness of kind, is powerful in experiential identification. In the case of Christ, he was moved by the mightiest impulse and bound by the closest tie in this; for no human father or mother is so near in kind, and as true to relationship as he.

Love is also a powerful factor in the process of identification. In fact, its very existence is perpetuated by this process. Identification is the very genius of love. The more powerful and unselfish the love, the more complete the identification with the loved one in everything. Hosea learned this truth. A wondrous, God-given love sent him after his unfaithful wife. He brought her out of the slavery and degradation into which her sin had sold her. He took her back to his heart and home and life again. Love identified him with all her shame

and sin; it shared the penalty and the pain with her; and it saved her when all else would have failed. It was Jesus' love, perfect, powerful, and unbounded, which led him to the cross, nailed him to our shame, and united him to our sin and its consequences. As one has recently expressed it:

The spot where the fulness of love met the supreme virulence of sin must be marked by a cross.⁷

Dr. Newman Smyth says:

Vicariousness belongs also to the integral nature of love. It is love's power of putting self through sympathy into another's life, of taking another into its own heart. By our sympathetic affections we live others' lives, and are made happy or suffer pain through our oneness with them. This sympathetic faculty of love gives it interpenetrative power; by its vicariousness it can enter into alien moods, make itself at home in strange experiences, become one in spirit with the soul of others. . . . Through this vicarious power of sympathy with the creation, which is inherent in love, the possibility of reconciliation and final harmony of life of sinful humanity with the life of God is rendered conceivable. The possibility of atonement is involved in the creation from the beginning, since love from eternity is vicarious as well as self-imparting, a love that wills to live in and, if need be, to suffer with, the creation which as benevolence it calls forth.⁸

Another element in the process of personal identification with sin, is what at first sight might seem capable of doing only the opposite. *It is the responsiveness of the will of Christ to the will of his*

⁷ Charles Allen Dinsmore, "Atonement in Literature and Life," p. 209.

⁸ "Christian Ethics," p. 230.

Father. The plan of the atonement was the plan of God, and Jesus knew that it was his Father's will that he should die the death for sin. It was not merely that the law "numbered him with the transgressors," for that was by abuse of law. The Deuteronomic code pronounced his body "the curse of God" as it hung on the tree, but that was formal law, and human conscience may not be able to see the ethical ground of its application in this case. To Jesus, law was mediated directly from the Father. For him the will of his Father, that he should be identified with human sin, was known intuitively and transmuted instinctively into experience. The will of God was the law of his life and experience. The processes thereof corresponded exactly with his apprehension of the divine will. Nothing could be more sensitive, responsive, and equational to the will of God than was the conscience of the Christ. His obedience was as perfect as his love. Under the sense of the divine will, Jesus spoke many times before and after his death of its divine "oughtness." The crucifixion became his experience because the cross was in his heart; and the cross was in his heart because the law of God was in his soul. Perfect obedience depends upon complete knowledge of the perfect will, and perfect will to obey. Experience is perfect when it is the equation of the will of the Father. Jesus' experience was as perfect as his character.

Further, *sacrifice itself is a principle of identifica-*

tion. It is a central religious and social principle with men because it is central in the nature of God, and also in his relation to all created things. Its perfected processes are hidden in the deeps of divine existence; but something of it may be understood from known human and divine relations. From the first, man himself has been sacrificing both in work and worship. This was done daily at the call of human needs, and instinctively in religion to put the soul *en rapport* with the nature and life of God. For this reason sacrifice has always been the experiential dynamic of religious life. Whether in religion or in the social relations sacrifice is essentially a principle of identification.

There is also the psychological principle in the process of experiential identification. In its working, the mind and soul of one assume for another, get under his load, and undertake for it. Imagination, one of the most realistic powers of the soul, puts the person to whom it belongs in the place of the other. In psychological identification all the powers of the soul are intuitively placed at the disposal of the soul and circumstances of another.

This brings us to the point where it may be observed that all the foregoing are not sufficient to explain why the identification with sin took place on the cross. Jesus knew before the crucifixion of the relation which he bore to humanity. He did not begin to love when he began to bleed. His responsiveness to the will of God, and his sacrificial powers,

did not begin their exercise for the first when he was crucified. In what way did Jesus then identify himself with human sin as he had not before? This is the crucial point.

Was it not by the very act of submission to the sin of his crucifixion? Was it not in making the crucifixion possible by surrendering his body to the murderous will of sin? Did he not thereby practically assent to sin? This cannot fairly be called sinning, for the reason of his consent was as clean as the unsmirched whiteness and purity of the holiness of God. This is the unique case of sinless assent to sin; but the sin was no less sin in all its sinfulness because he sinlessly assented to it. The personal identification with sin was none the less actual because he sinlessly gave himself over into the hands of sin, to do with his body what it wished.

There is absolutely no escape from the conclusion that the crucifixion could not have taken place without Christ's consent. There is also the fact that in it he took an unprecedented attitude to sin. Infal-
libly, before, he had frustrated its murderous designs upon himself. Now he surrenders his body to the death at its hands. He could not, it seems, save from sin without assenting to sin. He could not be identified with sin in reality, except by consent to some sin in actuality. His permission of it opened the door of his experience to the entrance of the whole realm and full results of sin. "He saved others; himself he could not save." To permit this

sin that he may remit sin in atonement, may seem at first sight contradictory. This identified him with but one sin. That was sufficient. What identified him with one sin identified him with all. In every case, consent to one sin is assent to the power of all sin. Jesus did not need to be born of every mother in order to be identified with humanity. He did not have to lie in every grave to be identified with the dead and buried. He did not need to consent to every sin in order to be identified with all sin.

Sin is such a perfect solidarity that Jesus' identification with it all was perfect. There never has been a sin which was not in quality and essence the same as that to which the Lord was related by his crucifixion; but in this sin the vileness of all sin seemed concentrated. It was the masterpiece and crown of all sinning. The crime of the crucifixion summed up in itself the utmost sinfulness of sin.

Contact with one such sin as this was contact with all the universe of iniquity. On the soul of Christ, the whole weight of the world's sin rested because of this contact. Through his crucifixion there entered into his experience the whole power and effect of iniquity. The cross was the rift through which there poured into the chamber of his soul the fumes of the pit. Through this inlet came the inrush of death itself to feed its hunger:

Death

Grinned horrible a ghastly smile, to hear
His famine should be filled.

XV

THE DIVINE EXPERIENCE
IN ATONEMENT

IF Christ had done less than die for us, therefore—if he had separated himself from us, or declined to be one with us, in the solemn experience in which the darkness of sin is sounded and all its bitterness tasted—there would have been no atonement. It is impossible to say this of any particular incident of his life, and in so far the unique emphasis laid on his death in the New Testament is justified. But I should go further than this, and say that even Christ's life, taking it as it stands in the Gospels, only enters into the atonement, and has reconciling power, because it is pervaded from beginning to end by the consciousness of his death. . . His life is part of his death; a deliberate and conscious descent, ever deeper and deeper, into the dark valley where at the last hour the last reality of sin was to be met and borne. And if the objection is made that, after all, this only means that death is the most vital point of life, its intensest focus, I should not wish to make any reply. Our Lord's passion *is* his sublimest action—an action so potent that all his other actions are sublimated in it, and we know everything when we know that he *died* for our sins.

—Prof. James Denney, D. D.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE DIVINE EXPERIENCE IN ATONEMENT

MAN planned the death by the cross; God planned the death which took place on the cross. This does not mean that the death of the Son was in itself desirable to the Father. God plans, not according to his own feelings, but according to the ethical situation. He does not abandon the world because sin is in it. To plan for the good of the world he must of necessity plan about the plans of sin. When Joseph's brothers, in treacherous inhumanity, sold him into Egypt, God did not refuse to turn the evil deed to purposes of good. When the Jews determined upon the death of their Messiah, God did not refuse to have anything further to do with the matter. There was then all the more need for God so to plan that their detestable sin should completely outwit itself.

To say that in such a world as this, God could not prevent the death of his Son, is to contradict flatly the teaching of Christ on this matter all through his life, and even at the very moment of his arrest. True, the death of Christ was the greatest crime in history; but it was not thereby beyond the Father's power of prevention. Had it not been that he intended to make this death the greatest power

to save from all the crimes of sin, he would have prevented it. In the divine plan of the atonement there was included and overruled the plans of sin. God was justified in that the means he used was unavoidable. The physician could become the cure only by allowing the disease to come upon himself. Here we meet with that which is found everywhere in life on earth, the inseparable intertwisting in the workings of good and evil.

Jesus himself never took the attitude that he was at the mercy of sin and of sinful men. He consistently taught that his death was the will and plan of the Father. To him the plan of the atonement was not any the less the plan of God, because it took into account what sin would do with him when it was unhindered. Only in the struggle in Gethsemane was there any suggestion that Christ thought of his own will in the matter; and thereby he really enhanced the glory of his faith in his Father, in that he showed it was not tainted with fatalism. The pathos of that struggle would be made pointless and ludicrous on any other view than that the Saviour believed that the Father had appointed "the cup." His prayer of triumphant submission, "nevertheless not my will, but thine be done," was not an empty delusion. Jesus said long before that hour of struggle: "Therefore doth the Father love me because I lay down my life. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down myself."

I. The experience of God the Father and the Son during the crucifixion was characterized by a strange and painful interference with their fellowship. The disturbance of his relations with the Father was the sure sign that the Son's identification with sin was real. The withdrawal of the Father's presence is everywhere the infallible indication of the presence of sin. There is absolutely no other reason for this withdrawal which may be given. There can be no real and satisfactory explanation of the bitter nature of the Saviour's suffering, other than an actual change of attitude on the part of the Father.

A constant presence of sin was manifest about the Lord during his lifetime. As an external presence it entered his experience from day to day; but on the cross it entered in an entirely different way. Hitherto the ocean waves of iniquity beat vainly around this solitary island of sinless personality. Now a flood overwhelms him. Formerly the flames of sin threw their baneful glare and foul wreaths of smoke only into the atmosphere which the Christ breathed. Now the home of the Christ-soul has the dread fire in conflagration within. No wonder that darkness covered the face of the land, for this was but the outward symbol of the darkness within the experience of the suffering Son of God.

On the cross for the first time sin affected the Son's sense of joy in the Father's presence. At Calvary no angel comes to succor as at Gethsemane. Lying prone beneath the olives in an agony of

sweat and blood, "the suffering Saviour prayed alone," only so far as men were concerned:

'T is midnight; and for others' guilt
The Man of sorrows weeps in blood;
Yet he who hath in anguish knelt,
Is not forsaken by his God.

God is neither cruel nor arbitrary. Had not Jesus' identification with sin and the personal nature of the atonement made it impossible, God would have made his Son's death a glorious triumph of his sustaining presence. *This he has done for countless thousands who, to say the least, were not more to him than his "Only Begotten."* This change in treatment is explained only by the truth which lies at the heart of the atonement: "Him who knew no sin he made sin on our behalf."

The process of becoming the atonement began when Jesus Christ was so made one with sin, that it consciously affected his relation to his Father. In the crucifixion the contest with sin was carried up above the human plane to be fought out in the higher relationship of the Father and the Son. Sin had its wonted effect even there; but the most that it could do was to interfere temporarily with that relation till death resulted. The battle with sin never could have raged up from the lowlands of human experience to that summit of heavenly height, but for Christ's twofold identification with humanity and iniquity. Wherever it is, sin is sin. It was not any kinder to Christ than it is to us.

Nay, it could be all the more cruelly torturing and murderous to him, because of what it found him to be. It was its wonted effect that killed him.

What was the experience of the Father during the atonement? It could not be other than suffering unparalleled. Never had sin brought such agony to him as now. Never did it bear so excruciatingly painful relation as when "The Only Begotten" was nailed to the tree. It was all the harder in that he himself had permitted, yea, must permit sin so to do, in order to save the sons of men. The Father was not a divine Shylock, a demon deified, inflicting excruciating penalty, and drinking deep satisfaction from the resulting agony. If he were that, it would not have been such keen pain to the Christ to be separated from him. It was because the Father is the personification of perfect goodness, sympathy, and love that the Son's separation from him caused such immeasurable sorrow to both.

Of course, there was satisfaction to the Father in the pain which his Son and he himself were enduring; but suffering rather than satisfaction was uppermost in his experience. There was satisfaction that the redemption of man was being purchased, the righting of the wrong of sin instituted, and the salvation of man wrought out. There was penalty borne in the atonement. It could not be otherwise. It was not imposed mechanically and arbitrarily. Sin inflicted it as it never could before. It was the awful price which God must pay to de-

stroy it and right its wrong. Part of the penalty of sin always falls on the Father. The heavier end of the suffering rests on him rather than on us. There is so much more of him to suffer, and so much finer sensitiveness to the effect of sin.

The unavoidable separation from the Christ caused pain to the Father during the crucifixion. It was the anguish of his heart that from his well-beloved Son in the throes of agony, he must withdraw his presence. By the abuse of civic health regulations, a child was taken from his bed when at the worst in sickness from diphtheria, forced from his home to an isolated hospital. The health officer, having forgotten to notify the hospital of his coming, the child was compelled to stand at the hospital door in a bleak and bitterly cold wind while neglected red-tape formalities were attended to. As a result, he took cold, and his neck soon swelled up to frightful proportions; and suppuration set in. What think you were the feelings of the father of the child, as from time to time he stood outside that hospital, looking up at the silent, bare, second-story windows of the ward where his loved one was suffering? With choking throat and aching heart often did he turn away, and return home to look into the empty cot. Another little child forced in the same way from home, fretted night and day till she died. The mother, in poor health at the time, could not bear the agony of separation from her sick child; and she also passed away. Think you that

an earthly father, or mother, has more feeling for a sick child than the heavenly Father had for his crucified Son?

If theologians had more schooling in the seminary of parental suffering, they would not attribute such horrible passion to God as gloating over the pain and misery of the dearest. No! The Father's separation from the suffering Son was an agony which knew no limit. Heaven was a place of gloom that day, and the saddest spot in the whole universe was the great, throbbing, sobbing heart of the Father in heaven. With Jesus there was too much suffering for sadness only. The pain in the throat of the child sick with diphtheria is different from the pain in the throat of the sympathetic, suffering mother. Somewhat in that way did the sufferings of the Son differ from those of the Father.

The withdrawal of the Father's presence from the sin-bearing Son was anything but arbitrary. *In part it was but the other side of the incapacitation of the Son for communion with the Father by reason of his real identification with sin and the moral distance which thereby had come in between them.* This disqualification was experientially actual. Of course, God could not hold fellowship with that which destroyed the very sense of his presence. It was an utter impossibility for the Father to hold the least degree of communion with sin even when in the atoning experience of his Son. Sin is never anything but sin to God; and the Father must

treat sin as sin, no matter what pain thereby came to himself and to his Son.

But once Immanuel's orphan cry the universe has shaken,
It went up echoless, alone, "O God, I am forsaken!"
It went up from the heart of Christ amidst his lost crea-
tion,
That at last no child of his should use those words of
desolation.

II. No tongue on earth can fully describe the sufferings of Christ during the agony of being made the personal atonement for sin. We would have to know how much God the Father was to Jesus Christ, his Son, before we could know in full the measure of their pain. When we could tell all that the presence of the Father and of the Son meant to each other, then could we reasonably attempt to describe completely their suffering from separation. Perfect communion, unlimited fellowship, and divinely loving intercourse which had run on for unnumbered ages, knowing no interference, now suddenly felt the shock and break of interruption. If every swift-revolving planet in the heavens had suddenly come to a standstill, the jolt would not have been so great. How often has it happened that after many happy years of wedded life the surviving husband or wife could not stand the shock of separation at death. When a bond of relationship as much greater than that as the earth is greater than a grain of sand, was in a moment rent asunder, no wonder that the agony of death ensued.

When such ties of fellowship were snapped under the world's weight of sin, the quivering body nailed to the tree could not stand the resultant reaction from the shock to the soul; and the immeasurable spiritual strain recorded itself in death tremors.

Sin torpifies human sensibilities. It was different in some respects with Jesus. Not having committed the sin which he bore, he was not benumbed into unsensitiveness to its effect. He refused to be drugged and to have escape from the physical part of his agony that would naturally accompany the spiritual. He was so perfectly good, so completely free from callousness, that sin had in all the ages its choicest opportunity to torture. The closer it came to him, the greater the suffering from his abhorrence of it. The closer the contact with its indescribable loathsomeness, the more painful the repugnance which his nature felt toward it. In startled dread his soul battled with the foul fumes of the pit, which rose all around him. Nailed to the tree, there was no escape for him from the vile vapors of death encircling him. As Charles Dinsmore describes it:

He tasted sin's utter godlessness. A black cloud drifted up from the abyss, and as the dripping gloom encompassed him, he "tasted death for every man." The bitterness of the cup which the Father would not take from the lips of his Son, was not the pains of death, it was the consciousness of the sin of the world—a perception of what sin meant to God, and of what it is in its essential nature.¹

¹ "Atonement in Literature and Life," p. 203.

The battle of the atonement on the field of Christ's experience was necessarily an irrepressible and truceless contest. It was the decisive cosmic issue between the forces of evil and the "Captain of our salvation." Upon his head broke the full fury of the storm of battle. The conflict between the mutiny of sin and the loyalty of the Son was now to be fought out unto death. Either sin would destroy him or he would destroy it. It could be no drawn battle; it was a fight to the death.

When ruined by sin we are willing to live the lifeless life. We are willing to live without God. Not so with Jesus. The ardor of his loyalty to God was not so easily cooled, nor his devotion so readily obliterated. In the atonement there was a struggle between Jesus' God-affinity and sin's God-detractiveness. Sin could not be met by God except in person, and it could not be met in person except on the field of experience. It could not be destroyed in its utmost, combined strength, except by an experience intrinsically sin-destructive and sin-reparative. The backbone of sin's resistance must be broken by him who was structurally stronger. The Herculean thews, unyielding in resistance to iniquity, were the unconquerables, Christ's faith in and love for the Father.

Despite the immeasurable agony which Jesus was suffering in body from the crucifixion, and also in soul from the withdrawal of the Father's presence, he loved him none the less; nor did his faith in him

abate one jot. The very strength of his faith and love added to the keenness of his pain. It was the height of his confidence and the altitude of his affection which were responsible for the depth of the misery into which he sank. The Father's face he could no longer see. For the first time he called him "God." Even though he was more distant God than present Father, the loyal heart of the loving Son yearned for him none the less. Though sinking physically, weighed down spiritually under the leaden load of sin, surrounded by fires of torture, his loyalty rose heavenward like some granite spire in the midst of a city of flames. With tremulous tones and in piteous pathos did he call after the vanished Father. Vainly did his eyes search the darkened heavens for the vision of the face of Father-love. Dense clouds rolled across the blue. A total eclipse smote his horizon with Stygian darkness. The pall of death hung over him. The loneliest of deaths closed in upon him.

Jesus prayed. That was because his faith in the Father was still unbroken. His confidence in him who ever before had heard and answered, is kept still unsullied. Sin could not master that. Of him the author of Hebrews wrote:

Who in the days of his flesh having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him out of death and, having been heard for his godly fear, though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and,

having been made perfect, he became the author (cause) of eternal salvation.² For it became him for whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.³

Though the situation in which Jesus was placed was one of intolerable misery, he did not wish to relieve himself by escape. His body might fail; his soul would never yield. He was on the death-rack between the withdrawal of the Father's presence and the powerful pull of sin's detractiveness. In the mill of experience, he was being ground between the upper and nether millstones of death; on the one hand the feeling of divine dereliction, and on the other of soul-revulsion toward sin. God, who had withdrawn, was so much to him that he could not bear to live without him. Sin, which had come to him, was such a loathsome putrescence, such a fetid deadliness, that its presence within his soul and consciousness made life impossible. His unquenchable antipathy to iniquity and his undying disgust with it, made him willing to die, rather than in the least allow it. It was the strength of his goodness that made sin such sure death to him. In the very purity of his character was the certainty of his death.

III. Jesus died on the cross, not by it. *He would have died anywhere with such agony of mind and suffering of soul.* It was not the crucifixion that

² Heb. 5 : 7-9.

³ Heb. 2 : 10.

caused the death of our Lord. It was another suffering that killed him long before the cross could finish its wonted work of death. In the race to the portals of the grave the swifter agony of sin-bearing outran the slow-footed tortures of crucifixion. It was the strain of spiritual suffering, reacting upon his body, that snapped the thread of life. Yet, in proportion as the cross shared in identifying Christ with sin, it shared in causing his death.

How sin outwitted itself by putting Jesus to death! In his death, not only did the chance of final victory forever slip away from it, but by it a throne of glory was prepared for him who came to destroy it. Through this victory Christ would forever reign as vanquisher of iniquity. The hour and the power of darkness failed to put out the Light of the world. Sin lost its throne in the attempt to master the spirit of the Son of God, and to destroy the divine Sonship.

Jesus resisted to the end; he mastered sin at every point. He won a victory that in its nature must spread itself out in ever-widening circles, until the utmost borders of human life are reached. He met within his soul and defeated there the innermost strength of iniquity. He unmistakably demonstrated his power to destroy sin in its utmost energy and right its wrong. Carried, a willing prisoner, into the central citadel of sin, instead of being imprisoned therein, he makes that strategic center his throne and unique place of power. The key position

of sin's fortifications was thereby transformed into an impregnable fortress of God, a place of refuge for all mankind.

He hell in hell laid low,
And Satan's throne o'erthrew,
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,
And death by dying slew.

Jesus died. Sin seemed to have triumphed. Hell appeared to reign. What seemed the execution of the royal prisoner turned out to be the execution of the executioner, and the destruction of the destroyer. The ending of the best life on earth was its beginning in unlimited power, infinite enlargement, and unending permanence. In Jesus' death, death died; and spiritual captivity was taken captive. It was as Micah prophesied: "He will subdue our iniquities"; and as Paul announced: "He is able to subject all things unto himself."

Jesus knew when the end had come. He felt the break in the life of his body. Was it not heart-break? There is good evidence that it was. He cried, "It is finished." He was then given unto the farthest limit of life and death; no part of his being was left out in the personal sacrifice. In entire personality he was then wholly surrendered unto atonement for sin. The wrong of his own crucifixion was thereby turned into a righteousness. *The battle of the atonement turned on that point. As by one sin he was identified with all sin, so in overcoming the*

sin of his crucifixion and transforming it into a power of righteousness, he overcame all sin and became the atonement for it all. The offense and wrong of sin were thus made right in him.

Since in the experience of the dying Saviour were focused all the virulence, pain, guilt, and desert of sin on the one hand, and the ethical merit, the spiritual virtue, and the atoning vitality of a divine person on the other, perfect atonement was accomplished. The death which perfected Christ as atoning Saviour, being due to inoculation with the virus of sin, there resulted not only a life immune to iniquity, but also the universal antidote to sin. Never more could sin directly oppose the Christ.

Death in releasing Christ from the body nailed to the tree, freed him from the identification with sin, and its resultant spiritual disability. The agony of separation from the Father released him into the fellowship which was his very life. Passing through the gates of spiritual and physical death, he conquered death and vanquished the separation of sin. The flood of sin's power, which had been sweeping over the Christ, at last subsided. It fell back from his divine personality as a retreating tide from an adamant shore. Then was laid bare the impregnable foundation of the Rock of Ages. Then was the Rock of Ages made the corner-stone of the world's righteousness.

The Son's native affinity for the Father burst in death the bands of sin's separation. Christ is the only

one who has mastered sin by bearing its penalty, and suffering to the full its natural and legitimate consequences. Here is a person who, having passed through the experience of death because of sin, entered the presence of God at once with acceptance. This announced his person constituted forever the means of access for sinners into the presence of God. The death on Calvary was not merely God's declaration that the problem of the atonement for sin has its full solution in the person of Christ; it was the means by which the Christ became the atonement, even as the incarnation was the means by which he became man. The Babe of Bethlehem interprets the significance of his birth, rather than that his birth interprets the God-child. The Christ is the interpretation of his death, rather than that his death is the interpretation of him. We are sure that Jesus is the resurrection because he arose from the dead, and ever since has made the dead to live. We know that the Son of God is the atonement for sin, because he died when there was no other reason for his death but this—to right the wrong of sin, and also because he has ever since been the power of the world's righteousness. The person transcends the event; but he is evermore something other than he was, because of the event of his death. We know the meaning of the event through knowing in experience the power of the person who passed through that event; and yet how little we know, compared with what lies beyond.

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I have aspired to know the might of God,
As if the story of his love was furled,
Nor sacred foot the grasses e'er had trod
Of this redeemed world;

Have sunk my thoughts as lead into the deep,
To grope for that abyss whence evil grew,
And spirits of ill, with eyes that cannot weep,
Hungry and desolate flew;

As if their legions did not one day crowd
The death-pangs of the conquering good to see!
As if a sacred head had never bowed
In death for man—for me!

XVI

THE RESURRECTION AND THE
ATONEMENT

Who deems the Saviour dead?
And yet he bowed his head,
And while in sudden night the sun retired,
And through thick darkness hurled,
Reeled on the shuddering world,
The mighty Son of God in blood expired.
Expired; but in the gloom
And silence of the tomb,
Death's mystery unveiled to mortal sight:
Triumphant o'er his foes,
A conqueror he rose,
And from the grave commanded life
and light!

—*Francis de Haes Janvier.*

THE Christian scheme of salvation through incarnate God is the world's center of gravity, toward which everything tends; its own center of gravity is the cross; for it is not "Christ" simply, but "Christ crucified," whom we preach. Not the person constituted by pure birth of Mary is the power of God unto salvation, but that person as offered, slain, and raised again.

—*Rev. J. Oswald Dykes, D. D.*

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE RESURRECTION AND THE ATONEMENT

THE atonement and the resurrection are two great central doctrines of Christianity. They are complementary, the one to the other. Neither of them would have place and power without the other. But for the resurrection the atonement would have been ineffective. But for the atonement the resurrection would have been as empty as the tomb which the Saviour left. It is in order, therefore, to give some place to the relation which the resurrection bears to the redemptive and mediatorial work of Jesus Christ.

I. There is more in the physical part of our nature than is yet known to us. In this important field of investigation science has been reaching on to the discovery of fact after fact; and the end is not yet. The resurrection of Christ teaches us that the physical is essential to human wholeness; otherwise his rising from the dead were an impertinent superfluity. Too often the body has been looked upon as non-essential and a curse. Such a view is based on the utterly unworthy theory of the material origin of sin and the natural degradation of matter. Whatever the share our bodies have in sin, we are not complete

without them. We were not made to exist as spirits. Even a disembodied soul is intrinsically unlike a spirit, and is neither complete nor content out of touch with the material universe. The disembodied soul is an incompleteness and a yearning, crying, "How long, O Lord, how long?"

Ethics involves the dualism of right and wrong. Somewhat in the same way human nature involves the dualism of matter and spirit. Monism in either case means death. The spiritual monist contradicts his theory every minute in practice. He thinks he is an orthodox spiritist, whereas to live at all he must be a chronic backslider. In experience he is a realist; hunger makes him a materialist; and in business he has never been known to take the idea of money in payment of a debt.

Idealism and realism are described as conflicting systems of thought; yet there is truth in both. They are opposing views only when either is claimed to have the point of view from which all truth may be seen. This is opposition of claim, not of substance. Monism is also set over against dualism; but they are only different aspects of the same thing. In all monism of sphere, for example, there is the dualism of essential opposites within the sphere. It is not in the interests of monism to deny this dualism.

To doubt the existence of hot or cold, is to deny temperature; to deny the bitter or the sweet, is to deny taste; to disbelieve that there is either sound or silence, is to doubt hearing; to object to the

reality of light and darkness, is to deny sight; to deny the existence of right and wrong, is to blot out the moral universe; to doubt the reality of matter and spirit, is to doubt the reality of human experience. Christian Science admits the necessity of dualism in its own system, viz., the dualism of the real and the unreal, of the mortal mind and the spiritual mind, of truth and error. It is inconsistent to admit this dualism in one place and to deny it in another. To the man who is blind, darkness and light are not opposite; but that is because he is blind. To the deaf person, sound is not opposite to silence; but that is because he is deaf. The man who claims that to him there is neither right nor wrong, matter nor spirit, is really claiming to be dead in moral sense, and in ordinary powers of discrimination. When a man is dead to moral sense, he goes to prison; when dead to matter, to the cemetery. Any system which proceeds to destroy such powers of human experience works in the interest of death, even though it may deny the existence of death and the dualism of life and death.

The great bulk of human experience is made up of attention of one kind or another to the physical. For the very language with which we discuss spiritual things, we must fall back on terms which are born out of our relation to the physical. In fact, our language is a necessity which grows out of the alliance of body and spirit in one being. Underneath the two is the monism which makes this possible.

How comes it that the physical, holding so large a place in the service of the spiritual, must, to serve it better, be counted an unreality? How is it that we cannot have experience at all, except by practical acknowledgment of the reality of the body every moment we live? Why is it that in order to live, we must thus accept the unreal as real, the shadow as substance, the false as true? How could a good God so frame human experience that to have existence, it must be a living lie?

There is a task in this connection which those who call themselves "Scientists," should perform. Let them explain how it comes to be a law that every one who unites the two unrealities of bread and body, has the real experience of satisfaction. Surely, twice nothing is something, according to illusion arithmetic. Call the satisfaction an illusion, it is nevertheless a reality as experience. Illusion, in the sense that there is no experience, is an impossibility. Illusion is but the name of a kind of experience. Classifying an experience as an illusion does not put its reality out of existence any more than classifying a horse as a quadruped puts the horse out of existence. The mere classification of experience as illusion does not make it illusion. A lion, classified as a donkey, does not begin to bray. These scientists must show the basis of their classification. When they do so, it is at once seen that they have no basis other than that of arbitrary denial. This denial would as logically apply to experience in general, and would as rigidly

involve that all experience is alike illusion. What takes away the trustworthiness of one of our powers, takes away the trustworthiness of them all. If one of the faculties which God has given us, is not to be trusted, how can we trust God in other of his gifts?

In logic we do not stop when half-way to the conclusion. Having denied the physical, we must also deny the rational. Having discredited the distinction between matter and spirit, we must go on to the denial of the distinction between right and wrong. Strange to say, the latter is done and the reality of reason glorified. The explanation is: this idealism is born of a rationalism, rather than of the moral nature, and therefore must own its birth. When wrong is said to be impossible and sin an unreality, we have really said that goodness and righteousness are impossible, and that the moral and religious natures are superfluous or unreal. The distinction between right and wrong, and between matter and spirit must stand or fall together. *Belief in the reality of the moral, the spiritual, and the physical, is absolutely essential to belief in the reality of experience itself, which is the foundation faith.* To doubt this basic reality of experience itself, leaves no standing-ground for all other realities. Then the main work of Christ in salvation must also be unreal. Every system which denies the reality of sin and Christ's deliverance therefrom, is headed toward the destruction of our faith in the Lord. That which would

reduce the saviorhood of Christ to the realm of deliverance from illusions, is itself the consummate illusion.

Faith is the foundation of all philosophy and science, and as truly also of all religion. Doubt of the reality of right and wrong, and of matter and spirit, is a negative faith which on its positive side is so small that it has no room for faith in the reality of experience itself. *It matters little to us what is real, if our experience is not.* It does not matter what a man has faith in as the foundation of his philosophy, if it leaves out faith in his own powers of discrimination and in the involved reality of his experience. He has then no place in which to store his faith; and his feet are forever in the air.

“Hardly any person,” says Bishop Brooks, “has ventured to praise doubt as the resting place or floating place of the human spirit.” Of all doubt, the most treacherous is that of the reality of our faculties and experience. Here are two systems of Christian Science and Christianity, the former saying find peace by doubting the discriminations of the moral sense and the reality of the physical, and the latter, find peace by meeting in Christ the demands of the moral sense, and “presenting your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

It is sometimes said that it is between appearances and not between substances that we distinguish, and that matter and spirit, and right and

wrong are relatively real to us. This is pure juggling with the terms "real" and "relative." *There can be no relative of a non-existing absolute.* A thing is never relatively real. "Relatively real," is a pure contradiction in terms. Reality is the absolute. It is the apprehension of this absolute that is relative. Absolute apprehension is possible, of course, only to the absolute God. Relative right and relative physical imply the existence of the absolute of both, or they are not relatives. The absolute would not be absolute if it depended upon us for the reality of its existence. The person to whom right and matter are said to be relatively real, cannot be considered as the absolute of either; nor can his powers constitute or create the absolute. It is not a commendable process of reasoning which asserts the relative while denying the absolute, or admitting the absolute, makes it in essence relative.

As to appearances as distinguished from the reality of things in themselves, it may be said that appearances are not all subjective projection, otherwise they would not be appearances. The noumena are back of the phenomena; they differentiate the latter, and are known in them. The simpler the noumena, the less subjective projection takes place in the process of apprehension. The more complex and exalted the objects of apprehension, the more room is possible for the subjective to objectify itself in them; but the noumena would cease to be phenomena and become mere phantasms the instant the

objective became wholly subjective projection. It is an evidence of education to be able to distinguish between our subjective projection and the real objective.

What body and soul are in ultimate, we need not question. Something in the natures of the two ultimates causes the difference which registers itself in apprehension and experience. There is no theory of spirit parallel to the kinetic theory of matter, which gives us motion and yet nothing to move. If there were, and the soul could be thought of as a whirl of thinking and feeling, with nothing to think or feel, we could resolve both soul and body into a monistic flux to explain the unity of human being.

What the resurrection body is we do not know. We have not had a chance to know. In the very nature of the case it is a form of matter with which we are not familiar. Let us not mistake our ignorance for its non-existence and call the procedure science. There is now no reasonable doubt that there may be many forms of matter which are as yet undiscovered. It is but a few years ago that if some one had then said that a form of matter could exist with the properties which it is now known that radium has, the assertion would have been drowned in incredulous laughter. It is better to play the fool in laughing rather than in weeping. It would be better still not to play it at all. We are not to be blamed for some of our ignorance about the physical realm, but for our trading on it.

Not long ago we would have flouted the possibility of sending wireless messages across the heaving waste of Atlantic waters, rather than through them. The wireless call to the rescue of the passengers on wrecked steamers, if told a quarter of a century ago, would have then seemed a pure dream from fairy-land. What possibilities lie in what we call the ether! Who can guess the number of undiscovered possibilities in the physical realm? Must we not admit that the physical shades off into the spiritual and no man can draw the line between the two realms? How many marvels swing out in the vast beyond of the material world as well as in the spiritual universe! Recently there has flashed in upon us the revelation of a few more of the wondrous powers and possibilities in the physical realm. In the possession of the labyrinths of modern physical appliances, is it not entirely out of the current of the world's progress, and into a muddy side eddy to decry matter, doubt its existence, or limit its possibilities to the little we yet know of them?

II. To spiritualize the resurrection of Christ, in order to avoid difficulties arising from the limitation of our knowledge of the physical realm, is as unwarranted as to spiritualize his birth and death. When in one of the most widely circulated publications on the continent, a Christmas article a year or two ago soberly set forth that Jesus was born, not of Mary's body, but of her idea, we have in it pre-

cisely the same type of interpretation as that of the theologians who teach man's rising from the dead while the body remains in the grave. Surely, if it is resurrection for the body to remain in the grave, it is birth never to have been born. The recent explanation that Christ rose from the dead by telepathy, might also go on to explain that he was born and died by telepathy.

Passing through the gates of death, Christ left his body behind as the hostage of his return. He entered at once the state of disembodied spirits. He was thereby out of touch with the physical realm and the world where his person and atonement were needed. Soon he returned to the earth. He came back from the grave. It would not have been coming back from Joseph's tomb at all, unless he came in his body. It was a changed, a deathless body, with new powers and qualities; yet so identical in form with his former body that his disciples recognized him. His person could not now be treated by sin and sinful men as was the pre-resurrection body. After the resurrection his entire being was wholly fitted for the personal mediation of atonement, except that it was still in local relation.

In the person of the risen Christ there resides the sum and substance of the instituted atonement. In his victory on the cross sin lost forever the power of direct opposition to him. In part this was the promise and potential of the complete rout and final vanquishment of sin. At the same time Christ

had gained not simply the mastery over sin, but the place of personal satisfaction for it in relation to the Father. If, after what Christ had become to the Father in his death, some way could be found whereby he could enter human life, and there exercise his death-bought relation to sin and the sinner, sin's doom would be sealed and man's salvation secured. Toward that end the resurrection was an indispensable step, because of the personal nature of the atonement. It brought the Redeemer nearer to the place which he could fitly fill as embodiment and mediator of divine atonement.

Jesus entered, by the resurrection, the higher physical state to which man was destined. There was still another needed step in the removal of the limitation of the local relation of his person. In his ascension he entered the glorious state and relation which his deity permitted, and ultimately involved. From thence he could come forth in the might and glory of the Spirit of God. What further change his ascension wrought upon his body, we can but speculate from what Stephen, Paul, and John saw in their visions. No doubt glory and power were as much added to it in particular, as to his person in general.

The withdrawal of the physical prepared the way for the spiritual presence of the risen Lord. It is through the presence of the Spirit that there is made available to all the virtue and power of Christ's atonement. *He gives himself by his Spirit.*

Through his presence in the Holy Ghost, Jesus is able to communicate and thereby consummate his atonement. The Spirit of Jesus in his divine, atoning life bears to men the rich fruits of redemption by his death on the cross. Because of his death on Calvary the giving of the Holy Spirit was possible as never before. In the atonement the Spirit had new reason for access to human life; and in the person of Christ he had new power of ingress into human lives. The giving of the Holy Spirit after the institution of atonement was possible on a vastly larger scale, and with richer bequeathment. Henceforth the Spirit of God was freighted with the atoning life of the Redeemer. In the Holy Spirit Jesus was enabled to fill his place in all the earth as
THE LIVING ATONEMENT.

III. In discussing the institution of atonement, that was dealt with which might be termed loosely the transcendent to human experience. There may now be taken up the study of what might be called with reference to human experience, the atonement immanent. Christian belief asserts that God is both immanent and transcendent. A God who is wholly transcendent is wholly uncomprehended. A God who is only immanent does no more than worship himself. Such worship is not religion. Religion cannot be reduced to God worshiping himself. Pantheism is not a religion; it is a philosophy. The idealism which makes God worship himself, is

not religion; it is the philosophy of the impossibility of religion.

In the atonement there must be both the transcendent and the immanent, as truly as in the being of God. This is the more necessary since it is grounded and embodied in a divine personality. An atonement altogether transcendent to human experience would have no moral content for it, and therefore no saving efficacy. An atonement only immanent would be as a god only immanent. It would be no atonement. The doctrine of it would be a ladder for philosophy to stand on end in the air, upon which to climb and perform its balancing tricks. It would be much shorter than Jacob's ladder. Like it, however, the material of it would be dream-stuff, but not God-given, as was Jacob's. An exclusively moral influence theory of the atonement, for an example of the wholly immanent, fits better with speculative philosophy than with experimental theology. An atonement that did not lay hold upon God and make right with him, as well as possess human hearts, would be fatally ineffective.

There must be both the transcendent and the immanent in perfect atonement. As the personality of God depends on his transcendence, so does the power of the atonement upon its transcendence. As living touch with God is through his immanence, so living touch with the atonement is through its immanence. In the immanent is mediated to us what the transcendent has for us. The transcendent

cost the death of Christ; the immanent costs his life. The Godward range of the atonement cannot be fully explored for the very reason that it is the transcendent part; yet it is the very part toward which theology has hitherto directed its attention for complete statement. This will never be given. If it could, the atonement would cease to be the transcendent. When the infinite can be put in a teacup, then may the transcendent be fully investigated. The tendency to reduce to teacup transcendence the Godward mediation of the atonement, has invariably cheapened it.

There is far more promise of success and helpfulness in setting forth the atonement immanent, though lack of practice will, no doubt, hinder much. In coming days it is the doctrine of the atonement immanent which will receive increasing share of attention. The moral influence theory was a blessing to theology, in turning the study of the atonement in this direction. Usually theology has been charged with degenerating into the mystical when dealing with the immanent. The mystical, however, is not simply the divine in the immanent; it is rather the meeting place of the immanent and the transcendent, and is essential to healthful Christian experience. Without the mysticism of the Saviour, crucified yet risen, ascended yet abiding with us, Christian experience would be an earth without a sky, a sky without a star, a star and no beyond. Christian mysticism is not illusion; it is profusion

of vision. It is not gazing into a spiritual fog, but seeing afar, beyond the mounds of death.

The atonement in its relation to the resurrection and the ascension, has a wealth of mysticism. It brings to human life the power of vision and its choicest mysticism. Christ himself is the mystery of revelation and the revelation of mystery. Risen, reigning on high, and seated upon the throne of divine righteousness, he wears, as the world's Atonement, the crown of glory and of God.

Rise, glorious Conqueror, rise;
Into thy native skies,
Assume thy right:
And where in many a fold
The clouds are backward rolled,
Pass through those gates of gold
And reign in light!

XVII

THE LAW OF THE ATONEMENT IN
HUMAN EXPERIENCE

IN a word, it is in religious experience itself that our confidence in the divine redemptive wisdom and goodness has its roots, its evidence, and its hope of attaining its end. The very conception of redemption is supremely a *religious* conception; its proof is therefore necessarily to be found in religious experience. . . For the individual, therefore, the proof of the doctrine of redemption must always continue to be his own experience of religion as the power of a new life.

—Prof. G. T. Ladd.

It is subjectively that the objective is realized. . . The two, then, are really inseparable as convex and concave. Objective—that is, wholly without subjective realization—is the same as non-existent. Subjective, that is not objective also, is hallucination. So with the cross and its atoning sacrifice. The subjective or moral theory that finds all its meaning within us men and our individual consciences, and makes but little of the act external, objective, historical, consummated adequately and once for all—this, in trying to realize for itself the meaning of atonement, is really cutting off, as it were, the blossom which should become fruit, from the root by which it lives. On the other hand, the simply objective theory, which forgets the place of the cross within the Christian life, which says, “Go your way; be content; the atonement was once a transaction, with such and such meaning between God and Christ; but you have nothing in it, except to believe that it is a fact, finished and done”—this goes far to deprive the root of that fruit-bearing capacity which is its own inherent and proper meaning. The ultimate realization is indeed to be within us, the very transfiguration of ourselves. The sacrifice of Christ, as merely external to us, does indeed include all possibility, but as yet it only is as possibility; it is potential, it is preliminary—and it is provisional.

—Canon R. C. Moberly, D. D.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE LAW OF THE ATONEMENT IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE

EXPERIENCE is life; but all life is not experience. There may be unconscious life; but there can be no unconscious experience. The moral elements of life, because of their experiential nature, cannot be found in unconscious processes. While subconscious processes may be allied with it, Christianity cannot, because of its ethical nature, be thought of as normally taking a subconscious or a magical method of working. In ordinances, sacramental magic is a travesty on Christianity. There can be no ethical or religious impartation apart from experience in its reception.

This is not saying that all processes of Christian life stop short when they reach the border called consciousness. Even within the bounds of consciousness, no one fully realizes all that is taking place in his religious life. Nevertheless, Christianity as a divine service and a character-building process, cannot work in a state of unconsciousness. Character is accumulated as the result of willing, and there is no unconscious willing. Divine service is devotedness, and there is no involuntary devotedness.

Christianity is mainly redemptive. If the method of its salvation did not include the working of the moral and spiritual nature, it would be unmoral and unspiritual. However much the saving power of Christ transcends human understanding, it must enter moral experience to do its work. Only as his atonement is capable of being translated into experience, is it atonement in actuality.

Those who hold to mechanical theories of the atonement, usually make no attempt to show how it becomes vital to human experience. They are satisfied that in some real, though obscure way, it does its work. If the atonement were thought of as magical or mechanical in its institutive process, it would be difficult to show how it escapes from being the same in its operative process. Whatever it is at one end, it is at the other. If we had considered in a mechanical fashion the way in which Christ became the atonement, we would now be handicapped in explaining how he mediates it in human experience. Setting forth in terms of ethical experience his instatement as atonement, has helped in preparing for the work of presenting its equation in human experience.

I. Before showing that the atonement is mediated according to the law of human experience, it would be well to explain what is meant by *law itself*. The following description will not be exhaustive. Some subjects are such fathomless deeps that in attempt-

ing to describe them we either drown in vain attempt to reach the bottom or merely swim upon the surface. Such an ocean of truth is law.

Laws may be classified as constitutional and modal. There is always constitutional law back of modal law. The first is the principle by which a thing is constituted; the second is the method or principle by which the thing so constituted works. For example, water is made by the union of oxygen and hydrogen in certain proportions; this is the law of its being. The existence of water is brought about according to the principle contained in this constitutional law. Water runs down hill. This is the method of its habitual movement. It is the law of gravitation—which is a modal law.

The constitutional law of the atonement is one thing; its modal law is another. In endeavoring to describe the institution of the atonement, we were dealing with the former law. We now take up the law by which the atonement does its work of righting the wrong of sin in human lives. One had to do with the process by which the person of Christ became the atonement; the other is the modal law of divine self-impartment.

There is the law by which the moral nature of man comes into being, and the law according to which this nature works. What is constitutional law in man's being, is modal law in the divine activity. God gave man the law of his being, and thereby he defined what should be the modal law of

man's life. There may, or may not be, harmony between the laws or habits of man's moral activity and the law of his moral being. God's revealed law for man's proper activity is that which states the correspondence that should here exist. *Sin is the lack of correspondence between modal and constitutional law.* Sin can be atoned for only as these two laws are made to conform to each other.

The atonement was not made to save us from law, but unto it. There is a sense in which Christ saves us from the law, and a sense in which he does not. We are not saved out of the world of ethical law, but unto it. We are saved from the law of sin, only as we are saved from sin; we are saved unto the law of God, only as God dwells in us. The modal law of the atonement is higher than the modal law of sin; for one is a method of divine activity, and the other is a method of that which opposes the divine activity. In the atonement a lower constitutional law is superseded by a higher. This is done by bringing in the higher life, in which is resident the higher law.

The law of sin is part of the law of the ethical world. Even in its unrighteousness it works according to the righteous law of God. Of course, it does not work the righteousness of God; it opposes it. Sin does not break the foundational laws of the ethical world, it conforms to them. The soul that sins, dies; it could not be otherwise. Sin does not violate that righteous, ethical law; it exemplifies it.

Sin cannot break the foundational laws of the moral world, otherwise it would undo itself. Even God cannot prevent sin from bringing forth death; but he can prevent the eternal death of the sinner by bringing forth the atonement of life everlasting. In man's nature God replaces sin by himself, so that God's modal law and man's may be one and the same.

If sin does not break the foundational laws of the ethical world, we may be sure the atonement does not. For example, the atonement does not interfere with the law of human responsibility; rather, it establishes it. Even in this day we must set forth *a limited atonement*. This is a day of the blind removal of limits; and such a false liberalism undoes, rather than gives freedom. It would not help us in interpreting the atonement. An atonement without any ethical limitation, would be no atonement. The atonement of Jesus Christ is limited, not to numbers, but to contact and consent. We have already mentioned the law of contact in its mediation. The law of consent is based upon the fact that the Living Atonement "tasted death for every man." He did not thereby sweep away the right of each soul to decide its own destiny. God calls to righteousness; but he does not compel. Compulsory righteousness or compulsory atonement would be impossible.

The older Calvinism held that God foreknew because he had predetermined. The elect were, in

this view, what might be roughly called the pets of predestination. God foreknew them because he knew whom he would effectually call. This made his foreknowledge depend upon his intentions; but he foreknew what sin would do, though such was not part of his intentions. Has he not as worthy and real foreknowledge about all other things? Election on the sole basis of arbitrary predestination loads upon God a responsibility for the lost remaining so. If the whole credit of salvation is to be given to divine election, responsibility for the lack of such election unto salvation in the case of millions lost, is left without moral justification. "He willeth not that any should perish; but that all should come to repentance." This God could not rightfully claim, if but his will is the sole ground of his election. God must plan and elect; but he does this on no arbitrary basis. In the atonement he predetermines; but this includes sufficient room for voluntary moral response on the part of man. God's election is more truly and directly to service than to salvation. In neither election nor in atonement does God usurp the functions and assume the responsibility of man's will and moral nature. *He never does for man what man will be the better for the doing himself.* He had better let man choose perdition, than treat him as a mere unmoral animal.

No law of God is arbitrary, for his laws reflect his nature, which cannot be arbitrary. The law which has to do with man's spiritual nature, most

largely reflects the divine nature. Moral law is never a matter of mere divine decrees. All ethical law has eternally existed in the being of God. Only men attempt to make laws of right and wrong. We make modal law, rather than discover what it should be according to its counterpart in constitutional law. That is the trouble with the most of the laws of man—they are made rather than discovered. They are pottery when they should have been granite. If our parliaments sought to discover laws, rather than to manufacture them, there would not be such mountainous heaps of legislative junk, and our code-books would not so often be mortuary journals.

II. We come now to the consideration of the atonement in relation to human experience. The law which we must forthwith examine, is the subject-object law of all our experience. This working principle, or modal law of human experience, is in our day being brought more and more to the forefront.

In love, for example, there must be the subjective—the one who loves, and the objective—the one loved. Neither the subjective nor the objective alone would be love. The two are utterly inseparable in this life-process. All consciousness, faith, hope, hate, interest, and experience in general, proceeds according to this subjective-objective working principle. These two inseparable parts in the process of experience, are like the blades of a pair of

shears; neither is of use without the other. It was the failure to recognize this that resulted in theories of the atonement being built up on either a subjective or an objective basis exclusively. In consequence, such theories, instead of being complementary, took on the appearance of mutual contradiction. In keeping with this law of human experience, the atonement is always mediated in a subjective-objective method; and thus it not only conforms to the law of the life of man, for whom it was made, but becomes his life itself.

There is the subjective sinner and the objective sin, the subjective wrong in the individual and the objective wrong to God and to others. There is the subjective Christ living in the human soul, and the objective "Christ crucified." In the experience of the atonement there is the subjective—the social union and ethical identification on the part of the saved and the Saviour; and the objective—the atonement on the cross. Thus, there is at least a threefold subjective and objective: the subjective wrong of sin's existence and increase in the soul, and the objective wrong to God and man; the subjective Living Atonement and the objective transaction or experience by which he became such; the subjective of the soul in possession of Christ and the objective of the Father and all others with whom the atonement makes right.

In general the subjective may be described as the living union of Christ and the human soul resulting

in the sinner's apprehension of the wrong of sin and the transfusion and transference of the cleansing and redeeming spirit and life of Christ. In general the objective may be considered as the personal sacrifice of Christ on the cross. This whole process of the mediation of atonement does not proceed upon a theory. It is the Living Atonement, and not a theory of the atonement, that is received. The benefit thereof is conferred not by logic, but by life. The individual may not be able to define just what Jesus did for him in his death. Of this, however, there may be some rays of apprehension. The merit and meaning of the atonement is so great and its truth so many-sided that one must find it hard not to see some glimmering of its meaning. Different persons may state in different ways what seems to them to be most prominent in the objective basis of the atonement. Theories may also vary as to the subjective. *The essential is not the form of the individual's statement of the atonement, but the objectifying of it in a subjective-objective realization.*

With some persons the subjective in the process of the atonement seems to be more prominent than the objective, and with others the reverse. Probably it resembles in this matter the character of the individual's experience in general. In persons predominantly thoughtful, the subjective is seldom more prominent. The benefit thereof is not in any instance to be measured by the amount of outward manifestation. The resultant spiritual life is in all

cases the test of the reality of the reception of the atonement. Children are often misjudged because of the quiet nature of their relation to Christ. Some judge in all religious matters according to effervescence, not effort. Let us also remember that all there is for us in the atonement of the eternal Son of God is not received in a moment.

It is the subjective-objective nature of experience which gives rise to the idealistic-realistic nature of life in general. We need Christ in both our idealism and our realism, our subjective and our objective, for unity of Christian life, similarity of purpose, and co-operation with one another. The subjective and idealistic, apart from him, may, for example, read anything it pleases into the objective word of God. A dozen persons may find a dozen differing meanings in the same passage of Scripture. The identity of Christ in both the interpreters of it and in the word, secures common understanding and agreement of interpretation. Individuals may be possessed by very different and inharmonious religious and social schemes. Possessed in common by the life of Christ, men may have common ideals and common programme in Christian work and social reform. So also in the atonement there must be this identity of the same Christ in its subjective and objective—in subjective mediation and objective transaction and person—in order that there may be unity in the process, universality and harmony in its experience.

To save disappointment in regard to the results of this analytic method in setting forth the mediation of the atonement, let us frankly admit that there is a grave insufficiency in describing its process first subjectively, then objectively. It is as if one were to proceed to explain love, first as a passion within a soul, secondly as a soul within a passion; whereas love is the embrace of soul with soul, in self-giving and self-finding. The atonement too is the love-embrace of the Saviour and the soul in self-giving, self-finding, and sin-righting.

In such an analytical presentation of love or of the atonement, the essential warmth of the life-process is lost. Description fails to get at the heart of the matter, when we deal with vital processes. The innermost of the mediation of the atonement baffles analysis and defies description. As even the most virile and elaborate treatment of the subject of love must depend upon the help of the experience of love itself to explain it, so must we rely upon the experience of the atonement to interpret what is here written, and to supplement what cannot be put into words. There are times in life when we wish that words did not mean so much; and there are other times when they seem so pitifully weak as to be well-nigh useless.

Words are the motes of thought and nothing more.

Words are like seashells on the shore; they show

Where the mind ends and not how far it has been.

XVIII

ATONEMENT FOR THE WRONG TO GOD

REFLECTION on the atonement, a recent theologian has observed, has in our time proceeded mainly under two impulses: (1) The desire to find spiritual laws which will make the atonement itself intelligible; (2) the desire to find spiritual laws which connect the atonement with the new life springing from it. The legitimacy of these desires no one will contest. There is certainly work for theologians to do under both of them. It has always been too easy, referring to this last point first, to treat the atonement as one thing, and the new life as another, without establishing any connection whatever between them. It has always been too easy, in teaching that Christ bore our sins and died our death, to give conscience an opiate, instead of quickening it into newness of life.

—*Prof. James Denney, D. D.*

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

ATONEMENT FOR THE WRONG TO GOD

THERE are three great spheres of the atonement in human experience. These are as follows: the righting of sin's wrong to God, to fellow-man, and to self. These should not be thought of as successive or mutually exclusive spheres; nor should it be forgotten that the process of the atonement but begins at conversion. The wrongs of sin are too numerous, too vast in extent, and too serious in nature to be all made right at the instant of regeneration. Some of its wrongs are, indeed, made right as soon as Christ is received. Others there are which take a lifetime, and even much longer, in which to overtake all the injury wrought.

I. The first wrong to God set right in individual experience is that of lack of faith in him. Faith is the primordial substance of human experience, whether good or bad. When we take the first step in right or in wrong, it is by means of faith. The different kinds of faith lay the foundation of the different kinds of experience, and explain their origin and differentiation.

The just live by faith, so do the unjust. What a

life is, depends upon what its faith is in. There may be but death for the moral nature in that which is believed in. The unjust die by faith, rather than live by it, because injustice can give no life to the soul which places faith in it. Faith is ever a conduit of death or a channel of life. *The patent fallacy of an idealism to-day, is that faith is practically all subjective.* It is all the same, it is said, whether a thing is so, or believed to be so, as far as the individual is concerned. Hamlet's saying, "There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so," and the common saying, "It does not matter what you believe so long as you are sincere," reflect this one-legged idealism. Belief that a bog is hard earth does not prevent sinking. Rather, it leads to it. Faith in badness, even when believed to be goodness, cannot give the experience of goodness. As much depends upon the objective as upon the subjective in the process of faith and of experience in general. Faith's subjective cannot work independently of its objective. The idealism which attempts to make it do so, gives its subjective a false independence, and reduces its objective to unreality.

Love is greater than faith; but it is born of it. The daughter may be greater than the mother; but the mother is first. There would be no daughter if there were no mother; and there would be no mother if there were no child. There would be no love if there were no faith; and there would be no faith if there were no love; but faith is first. Love may be

the greatest thing in the world, but faith makes this world possible. Jesus began invariably with faith in setting men right. Faith in God can commit no sin; want of faith can do nothing but sin, for it is sin. "Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin," said the great apostle. Sin is unfaith in God; it is the fruit of a character which will not believe in God; but it is not simply negative belief. This is impossible. Belief in a negative is merely faith turned inside out. There is no infidelity which stops short with not believing. Unfaith in God is a faith as definite and positive as that of Christianity. In relation to God there is just faith in him and anti-faith. What appears as innocent unfaith, turns out to be the most dangerous anti-faith. It is because of what God is and has done for man, that lack of faith in him is most positive sin.

As the primal wrong in experience made right by the atonement is lack of faith, it will be well to consider first the awakening of faith by it. In the subjective part of the process there comes in contact with the soul the direct influence of the unbounded faith of the living Christ. His faith proved its limitless power over sin in the atonement on the cross. Entering the soul which has received him, his first work is to start the rusted machinery of faith; in fact, his very entrance is the starting of it. What the prophet did in waking from the dead the child of the widow, is a crude figure of what Jesus does in spirit to the soul dead in sin. He becomes the

resurrection and the life of its faith in God. Somehow as warmth gives warmth and life begets life, so the living faith of the Living Atonement in contact with the soul dead to faith in God, reproduces faith in him. Only faith can beget faith. We say doubt is catching, but that is merely the reproduction of faith of another kind. The Christ corrects all the evils which result from perversion of faith, and awakens to the same faith in God that he himself has. What is perverted is righted; what is dormant is awakened; what is dead is revived. The imparted life of Christ, as soon as given, begins the exercise of faith in keeping with its nature.

There must, of course, be an objective of faith, that it may be awakened to life exercise. The atonement of Christ on the cross is well fitted to bear its part in the objective process of righting the wrong of lack of faith in God. In itself it stands as the most colossal act of faith in God ever enacted on earth. Sinners die because of faith in unrighteousness or lack of faith in the Father; Christ died because of his faith in righteousness and in the Father. Only faith awakens faith; but this awakening needs a faith as definitely objective as subjective. How often has it been demonstrated that the atonement is an objective of faith more powerful than aught else! How often have all God's love and grace elsewhere manifested, failed to win faith when the atonement succeeded! Men have refused to believe in him as Creator and Providence, and trusted him as Re-

deemer. They would not believe in him as holy, righteous, and good, but did believe in him as love and self-sacrifice. Calvary is the highest and fullest presentation of that which a sinner may understand. Even selfishness believes in being cared for. The cross presents God in such a light that only a wilful antagonism, a resolute badness, and an utter depravity will refuse to place faith in him when in any measure his work and purpose therein are understood.

II. The atonement must in part be revelatory, to be redemptive. It must not only reveal God as worthy of faith and love, but sin as worthy of dire condemnation. The atonement on the cross furnishes the objective of the process of awakening the soul to the nature and desert of sin. Some would put this first, but that is not the order of experience. There can be no awakening to the nature and desert of sin that does not come from faith in God. Faith in God alone can realize the meaning of sin. Faith in the right must precede conviction of being in the wrong. There is no faith in righteousness that is not faith in God. The realization of how wrong sin is, depends in the last analysis upon what we think of God and feel toward him. The atonement reveals the real relation of sin to God. At the cross divine love and sin contested for the faith of man. There sin in its treatment of God revealed the relation to the Father in which man is actually placed by sin, whither

it invariably moves, what is its unchangeable aim, and how utterly inexcusable it is. Not around Sinai but from Calvary thundered the deepest-toned condemnation of sin. The most tragic exhibition of the crime of sin against divine unselfishness was enacted on Golgotha. The picture of its hideousness was painted in the blood of the cross. Yet all sin is in spirit precisely what it was at Calvary. The atonement is the revelation of responsibility for sin in the light of its indescribably awful character and of God's unutterable love.

While the objective of the death of Christ has such revelation of the nature of and responsibility for sin, there would be no awakening to a sense of its guilt, were it not that the Living Atonement is at work within the soul, sharing in the subjective part of the process. As the sun's warmth in spring-time penetrates the frozen earth and wakens to life ice-bound vegetation, so does the life of Christ permeate the spiritual nature which has been chilled to death by iniquity, and wakens to life the sin-bound being. In the Christ-nature is an inherent dread and righteous detestation of sin accentuated by the experience of abhorrence during his death by it. In the spirit of the Christ is the highest power of impartation of his own feeling toward that which cost him infinite suffering and sacrifice. A spiritual transference in highest potential takes place when Christ enters the soul. He telepathically transfuses its consciousness with his own thought about sin.

Sometimes the very agony of the cross seems to be reproduced to some extent in the experience of those awakened to the sense of sin. No doubt the Saviour himself feels anew through union with the sinful soul the old horror from contact with and responsibility for sin. He suffers with the soul in the painful process of realizing what sin means, how it interferes with fellowship to God, and what loss and wrong have resulted from it. The Sinless communicates by divine metapsychosis the spiritually sane estimate of sin, and enables the soul by an ethical telepathy to share his feeling and the thought of God as to sin. The resultant sense of personal responsibility and guilt is sometimes quite overwhelming. That is often the case where it would be least expected. For example, in the recent Korean revival, and also in that in India, following in each place centuries of callousness as to the sinfulness of sin, the power of the atonement, both in subjective and objective, was seen in striking degree in sensitizing souls to the desert of sin. In reply to inquiry from eye-witnesses, there were received the following letters. Rev. Ralph E. Smith, of Cocanada, India, writes :

In times of the revival we did indeed see much of the travail of souls which had suddenly become acutely conscious of how insufferable was God's holiness. In the agony of soul caused thereby there were cries for pardon, the making of good resolutions, terror, sorrow, and burdens. But it seemed that only the sight of the cross

brought rest. Only those who saw in the cross the sufferings for their own sin, who cried out, "Oh, my sins have crucified him; my iniquities have opened afresh his wounds," seemed to have the old sin in them killed sufficiently to allow them confidence for rejoicing. And I have seen enough to believe that when Jesus' sufferings for sin actually became those of the soul, by that soul in its agony entering into those sufferings, they avail to kill sin in the soul. And the fruit of this is a great sense of spiritual cleanness and healthfulness, which enables the soul to enter into the joy and glory of the Lord. I have not yet systematized or coordinated the impressions then received. Perhaps I shall never be able to do so this side of the place where we shall know as we are known.

Rev. A. W. Woodburne, of Yellamanchili, also writes:

Almost without exception those who passed through the revival had flashed upon them by that wondrous unseen power a vision of Christ on the cross. They would cry out in agony unutterable, "Oh, it was my sins that nailed him there!" Others under deep conviction would roll on the ground and cry, "My sins are probing his wounds and opening them afresh." Sometimes during the course of prayer the petitioner would break out into the Telugu version of our well-known hymn, "At the cross, at the cross." The vision of the cross seemed to be so real to them, and so to absorb them, that they could see nothing else, and they got no rest or peace until they got rid of sin by confession and forgiveness. And often, for fear those wounded feet and hands and pierced side might be still suffering for them, they would think up things about which they were in doubt, and even of years' standing, and, as the Telugu idiom puts it, they vomited them out in confession. And when this process of conviction and con-

fession had been passed through, their joy was real and wonderful. They saw with new eyes the meaning of Rom. 8 : 1. This verse was sounded out again and again like a shout of victory. The atonement had become a living reality to them and passed from the realm of theological abstraction to that of the experimental knowledge.

III. In bringing about confession, cleansing, and pardon, the atonement is all powerful and efficacious. In its objective it stands as the substantial reason for confession, as well as the basis of pardon and the means of cleansing. The cross is an evidence that divine forgiveness is not based in indifference to the wrong forgiven; it is also the assurance of God that forgiveness is accompanied by adequate atonement. The atonement is the basis of the remission of sins, for it is the provision of that which cleanses the soul. Sin could not be expelled by an artificial process. On the cross the divine life of the Son of God passed through an experience which perfected him as the sin-cleansing life and personality. Hence the eyes of the sinner rest on "the Crucified" during the cleansing process.

In the subjective part of the process, this miracle within, the purging from sin, is accomplished. "The blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin." "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace." What do these words of John and Paul mean in reference to the cleansing power of the blood of Christ? They certainly did

not refer to the physical blood any more than Christ himself did when he spake of drinking his blood. His blood is the fittest material symbol of his life. Shed blood is the symbolic expression of his atoning life, even as the cross is of his sacrifice. When the life of the individual has been included in that of Christ's, a divine displacement of sin takes place, and all the cleansing power of the atonement is mediated to it. This divine life is both pure and purifying, and enables the soul to confess its sin, and to repudiate it in the name of Christ.

The same life which offered itself on the cross to the Father as the righting of the wrong of sin, now answers immanently and transcendently for the soul before the Father. It offers not only its own love on behalf of the sinner, but also begets in human souls a growing love for the Father. It moreover becomes the means of the divine releasement for sin's offense and wrong. The life instated by the cross into an existence as atonement is now instituted in the life of the individual as the power for expulsion of his sin, and as the link and bond of his union with God. The Redeemer, who assumes responsibility for the soul in all its relations on self-committal to him, assures for the future as well as answers for the past. The Living Atonement thus ever dwells in the soul, mediating between it and its God, and becoming the permanent means of the Father's bestowal of pardon, peace, and fellowship. "He ever liveth to make intercession," "Christ liveth in me,"

"Reconciled by his death," "Saved by his life," "We rejoice also in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the at-one-ment," "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

IV. The atonement on the cross was a satisfaction to God not simply in itself but also in the inauguration of satisfaction beyond. There was a divine satisfaction in the instatement of the atonement; there is also a divine satisfaction in its mediation. There was the satisfaction which Jesus gave to the Father in his death; there is the satisfaction which he now gives to him in his own life and also in human lives. Jesus' power of rendering divine satisfaction was not exhausted on the cross, though it reached there the highest possible point; yet it is the great work of rendering satisfaction in the lives of men which makes of permanent value the satisfaction on Calvary. The satisfaction by the cross made possible the satisfaction by the Christian.

The Living Atonement enters human lives in such method and measure that they satisfy God, negatively by the destruction of sin, positively by righteous living and personal sacrifice and service. The sacrifice on the cross reproduces itself in sacrificial living. The power of lives to render this satisfaction is limited only by the completeness of the possession and indwelling of Christ. The atone-

ment on the cross was not, therefore, an unrelated, isolated satisfaction; it was that which has resulted in constantly increasing divine satisfaction. This extended and permanent satisfaction is ever grounded in that of Christ crucified. Through him immortal souls become eternal satisfaction to God. There is, therefore, both subjective and objective satisfaction to God in the atonement. The range of both of these is limited by the nature and proportions of the personal relations involved in each.

An evidence that Christ's atonement is possessed by the individual consists in a strong sense of satisfaction in being right with God in Christ. This is but the reflection of the divine satisfaction. The great peace which results from Christ's redemption means that the objective atonement has been realized in the subjective. "For the whole fulness of God was pleased to dwell in him; and through him to reconcile all things into him, having made peace through the blood of his cross."

Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.

XIX

ATONEMENT FOR THE WRONG TO
FELLOW-MAN

AND here, glancing first of all at human society, we discover the appalling fact that sin, once existing, becomes, and even must become, a corporate authority—a law or ruling power—in the world opposite to God. . . . To break the organic force of social evil, thus dominant over the race, Christ enters the world, bringing into human history and incorporating in it as such, that which is divine. The life manifested in him becomes a historic power and presence in the world's bosom, organizing there a new society, or kingdom, called the kingdom of heaven, or sometimes the church. For the church is not a body of men holding certain dogmas, or maintaining, as men, certain theologic wars for God; but it is the society of the life, the embodied word. Hence our blessed Lord, just before his passion, considering that now the organic force of evil was to be broken, said, "Now is the judgment of this world, now is the prince of this world cast out." The principedom of evil is dissolved—the eternal life, manifested in the world, organizes a new society of life, breaks the spell forever of social evil, and begins a reign of truth and love that shall finally renew the world.

—*Horace Bushnell.*

CHAPTER NINETEEN

ATONEMENT FOR THE WRONG TO FELLOW-MAN

THE second sphere of the atonement in human experience is that of the relation between man and man. A wrong to man is no less a wrong to God. Sin wrongs man in man, and God in man. The greatest social wrong is that of godlessness in human relations; the greatest spiritual wrong is unbrotherliness. In the social relations God's greatest victory must come. There sin and atonement lie in broadest dimensions, deepest significance, and greatest possibility. The greatest Godward effect of the atonement is manifested in making right between man and man.

It is impossible that our wrong to God be made right by Christ without at the same time his making right our wrong to our fellow-men. The mediator between God and man is no less the mediator between man and man. There can be no limitation of the atonement to the Godward direction. Christ has as much power to make man right with his brother as with God. In his person there is wealth enough of atonement to make right all the imperative and God-dishonoring social wrongs. No matter how much wrong human lives may have suffered

from injury by others, there is sufficient in Christ to compensate them. *When the wronged refuse to accept the Saviour and his atonement, they themselves block the way to the redress of their wrongs; and responsibility for the wrong remaining unrighted, then rests with them.*

I. In righting the wrong to man, the subjective and objective in the process of the atonement remain unchanged from what they were in the first sphere. In the Christ who died on the cross, all humanity is brought into a new relationship. Christ died for all, and all are related to each other in his person and death. He thus enhanced and sealed the value of man to man, as well as of man to God. On man's part to refuse this new relationship, is to set at naught the death and person of the Son of God. Man is, henceforth, to us not simply a fellow-man, but a brother for whom Christ died.

In subjective union with the Saviour, the soul is fitted to enter into the life of atonement, to enjoy companionship with the Living Atonement, and with those of like possession. In a limited way, there is atonement which the individual himself may make; but the very desire to do so, is begotten by the indwelling Christ. The wrong of lack of love and of personal interest toward fellow-man, out of which all other wrongs grow, cannot be rectified, except by Him through whom there is the restoration of man to man. The instatement of Christ in human

relations means the restoration of normal relations between men.

There are two types of wrong made right in the social sphere, one in which the individual must share with Christ in such rectifying, and the other where such human effort is impossible. There are countless lives wronged by us which have gone far beyond our reach. When Christ undertakes for a soul in the atonement, what a vast and complicated task he assumes! How little we know of the number of persons injured by us and the extent of our wrong done them! Only divine omniscience can track down all our wrongs, and only a divine person could meet all these wrongs in atonement. The Lord represents in his person the infinite resources of God to make right all the wrongs of those to whom he is vitally related. As the Living Atonement he is the permanent instatement of God in human relations. He rights the wrongs that spring from godlessness and unbrotherliness in the relations between man and man.

II. One of the chief wrongs righted in the social relations, is the lack of faith in atonement. Those who receive Christ's atonement, must believe in atonement, in making right, in righteousness. Fellow-men are sometimes defrauded by persons who say that they trust in Christ. The fact is, the latter really believe, not in Christ, but in unrighteousness. To cause injury and refuse to make reparation is to

cut one's self off from Christ and his favor. Rascality cannot cover up its wrong by the thin veil of a mock faith in Christ's atonement. When men can in any measure undo a wrong and refuse to do so, they publish the fact that they have no real faith in righteousness, have neither part nor lot in Christ, and that the Living Atonement has no place in them.

Unless the atonement of Christ begets in us a desire for righteousness, it has never been received at all. Unless it has made man desire to be personally right where he can be by his own effort, it has done nothing for him. God cannot morally do for a man even in atonement, what the man himself will be the better for doing. God will not forgive those who will not forgive; and Christ will not atone for those who will not atone. Divine atonement is not of any value whatever to him who stubbornly blocks its way by refusing to make the atonement which he may. How can an unrepentant personality of iniquity possess the atonement in the divine personality? The life in which Christ dwells infallibly bears the fruits of repentance of wrong, confession of the same, and all possible reparation.

It is strange that God's gift of Christ should have received the treatment which it did from his own people. It is strange, also, that the greatest work of divine righteousness should be turned to the ends of unrighteousness. It is an utterly unworthy and immoral faith in the atonement which is guilty of

such a perversion. The higher the order and the greater the moral value of anything, the more certain and subtle the attempt of evil to subvert it. Jesus died for our sins; but not to enable us to live unto them. How false the honor to Christ when one who has wronged another, stands by the injustice, saying, "Jesus died for my sins, and this is one of them!" Such a belief in the atonement is really the worst form of its rejection. Belief in the atonement begets righteousness; it is the foundation of consistent living. It is the faith of demons and the doctrine of devils which presumes to found arguments for unrighteousness on this righteousness of Christ. To do this is to crucify Christ over again. It is, if possible, to be more cruel to him even than were they who nailed him to the tree. For the attempted debasement of the atonement there can be no atonement, but only the fiery indignation of the living God and the flaming sword of his vengeance.

It has been charged as a weakness of Christianity that it has failed in ethical results. This has been brought to pass by our unethical and mechanical faith in Christ's atonement. Its subjective, torn from its objective, has been nailed to a cross of sacramentalism, and its powers killed. When there will be more preaching that the atonement is not simply an objective transaction, but a subjective power, we shall have the "ethical revival" so often discussed. The mediation of atonement is as important as its making. Its possession by man can-

not be its undoing. The atonement only in the objective has been almost utterly powerless to meet present-day needs and social conditions. When Christ is given his place as mediator of atonement, the false dependence upon the objective independently of the subjective, will give way, and the power of the Living Atonement to make lives clean, will be seen. Men have shut the door in the face of Christ by objectively depending on the atonement, and subjectively refusing it. There can be no ethical revival that does not begin with the instatement of the heart of ethics in human life, the Living Ethic of Christ within the soul. The ethical results of his atonement cannot come when conditions are maintained which defy the dwelling of Christ in the life of man. There are no clean lives with Christ kept outside; and there are no unrighteous lives possessing the Living Atonement within them.

III. There is but one way by which all there is in the atonement for us can be received and possessed by us, namely, by seeking to give to all others what there is in it for them. It is by being sunk out of sight in the great processes of the redemption of others, that we fully reach our own. He that is dead to evangelism is dead to the greatest movement of God for righteousness. To be dead to world-wide missions is to be dead to the greatest effort of God to-day. Not paddling along the shores of the local church interests, but launching out into

the gulf stream of missions will make us right with God and man. If our lives are within the sweep of the mighty tide of righteousness flowing earthward in the Living Atonement, they will be swept on to all good. Only as men do their part in enabling Christ to reach all men, do they enable him to save them from a wrong to all men. The atonement is most ours, when most we give our lives as a channel through which it may reach our brothers. It is as instruments of the world's redemption that we most largely possess the righteousness of Christ. It is true that we receive salvation by faith in Christ; but how little can that man receive who believes in Christ as his Saviour only? *It is the faith which works the hardest that possesses the most of the atonement of Christ.* We owe it to Christ, as well as to the world, to give the gospel unto all men. World-wide evangelism is no more optional to the Christian than breathing. It is not a matter of choice to the Christian whether the kingdom of God is put first. In the nature of things it must be first. We seek first what we value most. We may add to our sin the greatest wrong of all by damming the flowing of this world's redemption through our lives. The atonement of Christ must most of all add to our condemnation, or make us spotless before God and man.

IV. The social wrongs of this world may be righted only by means of Him who is the world's

righteousness. His must also be the method. There has been constant conflict between the church and the Socialist in this matter. One says regenerate the individual; the other, reform the social institutions. In neither one nor in both these statements is to be found the whole truth. To regenerate the individual would be all right, if the social system in which he lived did not tend to degenerate him, To reform the social systems on a basis of unselfishness would be all right if the unregenerate could conform to such. *There is no system of righteousness and unselfishness with which men, as they are, would be satisfied.* The unregenerate heart is not subject to the law of God, which includes perfect social law, neither indeed can be. The world cannot be made right by social systems, when the social nature is wrong; nor can it be made right by individual regeneration so long as the social systems are largely in the interest of classes, tyrannies, and hoary injustices.

Social study is of God. It should be not merely the study of present social conditions, but of God's way out of them. The Socialist of to-day is in but the first stage of social study. Sociology may have its evolution no less than theology; and like it must pass through three stages. Attention will be successively centered first on method, then on means, and finally on end, which is manhood. The Socialist in the system-stage of method can but little appreciate as yet other points of view. The church, with

its ignorance of or indifference to social conditions, little appreciates the seriousness of the Socialists. The church needs to learn that there is no such thing as the individual apart from social environment and institutions. The Socialist needs to find out that there are no social systems which of themselves can make bad men good. The predominant tendency in individual or in system may persist in spite of each other. All men are not the same in social tendency; and all social systems are not the same in moral tendency. The need of wealth does not of necessity make men bad. Possessing it does not make them good. The individual is never regenerated out of the social conditions, nor by them. Good or bad, he stands within the moral environment, and as part of the social structure and system.

When the means and the end of social life will become of interest to the church and to the Socialist, the indispensability of Christ will stand out like the sun in the heavens. Already it has been proved that no matter what the social status of systems and institutions, the good in them has been enhanced and the evil diminished in exact proportion as Christ has been enthroned in the lives of those within them. The poorest social system with the living Christ in those within it, is infinitely better than a social utopia without him. Think of the contradiction—a Christless utopia! Christ's mediation between employer and employee is vastly better than Christless communism. The bad forms of social institutions

tend to be replaced by the better, under the influence of the Lord. Labor and capital are opposed only because the persons they represent are opposed. The better the social system, the greater must be the abuse of it by the selfish life. The more of the spirit of Christ within our lives, the more must we strive for social systems planned on principles of righteousness, and with the means adapted to the end of manhood in God.

We worship the Prince of Peace and multiply "dreadnaughts." What right have we to say that we love God, if we tolerate the awful waste of present-day armaments and the economic systems born of class interests and social injustices? Every battleship and class privilege mocks the love of God to man. God is no partisan Deity, though by some of our social conditions, economic principles, and international methods we seem to say so. No man has authority to believe that God loves him, unless he believes that God loves every individual of the whole human race. We do not believe that God loves all men unless we make our lives the expressions of that love. The universality of God's love and the brotherhood of man is not only the proclamation of Christ; he is one by whom alone both may be realized.

The better social systems will come as fast as we are ready for them. We forget that systems of righteousness cannot advance faster than the progress of our lives in righteousness. *The Christ in*

social systems keeps pace with the Christ in the social nature of mankind. We need better political, economic, and social systems; but most of all we need the Living Atonement, who will inspire us with his plan of righting the wrongs in these systems and be the living means of reaching the end of all related life. Let the same Christ be center and circumference, system and life of the social world, and it will be right. Its freedom will be won. Freedom will not then mean freedom from labor, righteousness, and the law of Christ. He alone who shared the bonds of humanity can make it free economically, socially, and spiritually. In him we free ourselves in freeing others. By him we pay the debt we owe mankind, and right its wrongs.

Is true freedom but to break
Fetters for our own dear sake,
And with leathern hearts forget
That we owe mankind a debt?
No; true freedom is to share
All the chains our brothers wear,
And with heart and hand to be
Earnest to make others free.

XX

ATONEMENT IN MORAL CHARACTER
AND SPIRITUAL LIFE

MOREOVER, the spiritual possibilities that lie in a relationship with Christ grow immeasurably greater when Christ is thus conceived as the self-communicating life-force. For being himself possessor of life in God, he must transform into divineness every life he enfolds: being himself the Son, he will give to all who make right adjustment of themselves to him the power to become sons. Life gripping life transforms into its own likeness the life it grips. That is known even in common human experience. A personality which obtains a commanding influence over another personality molds its subject personality to its own shape. What result save this can follow from the commanding mastery over our nature of the nature of Christ—the refining of the unrefined in us, the purifying of the sinful, till we are in the actual make of us fit members of that family of God whereof Christ himself is head?

—*Henry W. Clark.*

CHAPTER TWENTY

ATONEMENT IN MORAL CHARACTER AND SPIRITUAL LIFE

WE have come to the third and last phase of the work of Christ's redemption. How wondrously hath God framed together and interrelated in himself all things in the universe! Nothing is complete without him. No one can be wrong in any relation when right with God. All our other relations are but reflections of the primary relation to Christ. But they are more; they are spheres in which the Lord now lives, moves, and has his being. He "fillet all in all."

What man is in relation to God and to fellow-man is the true measure of what he is in himself. He cannot be one thing in himself and another in his relations. He has existence as moral character and spiritual life; but he has also his place in the relations which this character and life involve. If the wrong in these relations is made right, it must also be made right in his character and life.

In the perversion of moral character and the degeneration of spiritual life, we cannot but injuriously affect God and our fellow-beings, as well as ourselves. *Sin is a wrong all the way around.*

When it touches anywhere, it touches everywhere. If there were but one sinner in the world, and he guilty of but one sin, that wrong would injuriously affect the whole moral universe of God and man.

I. Life is a brief summer-time. Though short its fleeting day, it is long enough to produce maturity of spiritual form and fixity of moral character. In this brief season eternal wrong may be done to self by producing a soul barren in worth of moral character. Devoid of spiritual life, dead to communion with God, a foe to all goodness, the soul becomes a barrier to its own welfare, a discord within, and a worthlessness without. The atonement of Christ rights these wrongs to man himself. It saves his life by saving his soul; and saves his soul by saving his life. It has power to create moral character and to impart spiritual life. Through the indwelling of the Living Atonement, righteousness becomes the fiber of his moral being, and love the energy of his spiritual life.

Some believe in salvation by character. If by character were meant that of the Living Saviour, it would be true. Instead, it means that we are saved by our own characters. This is a confusing of end with means. We are saved *unto character*. Salvation by the character-building powers of the individual soul, is but the old doctrine of saving yourself, deceptively dressed up in an ethical garb. Salvation by character describes a character from

which it would be salvation to be saved. It would mean that the individual believes in his own powers to right all the wrong to himself as well as to God and man. Man could no more right all the wrong of his sin than he could lift the mountain ranges to the skies. It is time enough to propose salvation by character when some one has been saved thereby. Character is the record and result of salvation.

The moral and social powers of the soul share in the process of receiving salvation. The same powers, by the exercise of which we went astray, must be used in bringing us back. The will and the social powers are the gatekeeper and the gateway alike for loss or gain. A man would have no character at all if he were not a social being. In social life character most clearly manifests itself. There it realizes and cultivates moral affinity. There it finds material for growth. The life of character is manifested in social affinity. What is in one character passes over into another by means of the social nature; and the character of one person molds that of another. The more mature the character, and the greater its social energy, the more complete is its control in the construction of other characters. The more intense the spiritual life, the greater moral energy will it manifest in interpenetrating other lives, thereby communicating and reproducing itself. Because of what Jesus is in character and life, he is able to redeem all characters and lives with which he comes into social correspondence. He can change the character

of every individual who fully receives him, and transform it into the quality and stature of his own. The atonement enters character in the same way that sin did, namely, by moral choice and the social gateway.

II. The objective in the process of redeeming character and life is that of the moral character and spiritual life of Him who died on the cross. A clear portraiture of him and his ethical principles are providentially given in the Scriptures. They are, therefore, the most valuable moral literature in the world. In this objective is furnished the revelation of the extent of the loss and wrong of sin. It is measured by the difference between Christ's character and life and ours. The place which Jesus filled in the life of the Father, the spirit and purpose of his life, the work of love and redemption which led him to the cross, are not simply light on his character; they are the light in which the deformity of human character stands condemned. The highest moral character in the universe was uplifted by the cross, and the greatest failure in the life and character of man was then revealed.

As this great objective of the atonement rises up before the soul, there is first vexation at having been so duped by sin, then despair of ever becoming what Christ is in moral goodness. One moment there is doubt that God could ever forgive such wrong or repair such injury; the next the resolve

that even if God does forgive, the soul will not forgive itself. The latter state is one of moral disharmony. In the cross is found the reason for self-forgiveness. When God paid such a price for atonement accompanying forgiveness, we dare not enter into judgment with and condemn ourselves. To refuse self-forgiveness would be to doubt the power of the atonement to right the wrong to ourselves, and in that measure to render it inefficient. In the Christ more is promised in moral character and spiritual attainment than was lost by sin.

In him the tribes of Adam boast
More blessings than their father lost.

In the subjective part of the process, the Living Atonement in giving us spiritual life, saves us from ourselves as well as unto ourselves. Personal worthlessness is transformed into worthiness and wealth of personality by his incoming. Through vital union with his life, in its measureless breadth, intensity, and quality, we are taken out of ourselves, and our lives are drawn out into the richness and vastness of the interests and attainments of his own. The might of its upreach to the Father, the power of its down-reach to save the fallen, and the sweetness of its fellowship with God and man are made the possessions of the soul by the indwelling of the Living Atonement. The struggle of the soul becomes an endeavor to throw off every limitation hindering it from being lost in him. The atonement

is a process of God and humanity entering into possession of the individual, and of the individual entering into possession of himself. The glory of God, the good of man, the possession of all things are possible to him in whom Christ has reproduced himself in moral character and spiritual life. Christ's love made him the owner of all humanity in the highest sense, and the love of Christ in us creates the character to which such universal ownership is possible.

The indwelling of the Living Atonement results also in a blessed self-forgetfulness. It is a wrong of sin that it begets a morbid self-consciousness. When suffering from its spiritual prostration there is the constant agony of diseased self-consciousness. The more unfit the soul is as an object of its thought, the more consciousness centers itself there, and the way of recovery becomes barred. The soul possessing the presence of the Living Atonement tends to become Christ-conscious. Normal self-forgetfulness becomes habitual. When the thought of self does occur, it is the self of Christ's possession; and therein thought tends to rebound to him. Because of what Christ has become to the soul by his atonement, all things naturally suggest him. The more appreciation revels in him and his grace, the more impossible does it become for the mind in its thinking to put him aside. The more life merges into his, the more it finds its completion there. Filled with the richness of its thought and feeling

about him, the soul is relieved from the poverty of self-consciousness. Christ has become its life consciousness.

Christ must be subjective as well as objective in the process of ethical realization. When the atonement is made all subjective and independent of the objective atonement on the cross, Christ cannot own such a redemption as his. He cannot have fellowship with that which obscures his infinite sacrifice on Calvary. One cannot receive Christ and reject his work. If we have fellowship with his life, we cannot refuse fellowship with his sufferings in death or life. To ignore the instatement is to deny the official. To repudiate the cross is to reject the Christ.

Righteousness of character resulting from the atonement is not to be judged by comparison with other persons. How often it happens that according to the law of the righteousness of God, some weak one falling again and again before the onset of some terrible appetite or passion, is really far more righteous than some person walking very uprightly in these matters. In the one case there may be the righteousness of the life of Christ battling for the possession and ownership of the soul for which he died; in the other there may be stolid self-righteousness, resting indifferently upon laurels won by ancestors. The true measure of righteousness is advance in righteousness. He is the means of all progress in personal upbuilding. He is the vital

center of the righteousness of the moral universe. Possessing him and possessed by him, we are better than imitators of his righteousness; we are possessors of it, the generic righteousness of the ethical world.

The wrong to human personality as a divine instrument is also made right by the atonement. Sin weakens personality, dulls the mind, eats deeply into the spirit, destroys the temper of the soul in the heat of its passion, and leaves the divine instrument unable to hold edge, a broken tool, worthless for the service of the Lord. Out of the crucible of divine love human personality comes in a spiritual amalgam with that of Christ, and this makes possible a recasting and a reshaping of this material, so that the new personality becomes a fit instrument for the divine workshop where is wrought out the world's redemption. Once an instrument of unrighteousness, it now becomes the fit instrument of God.

A portion of man's nature has not yet shared in this atonement. The physical part of man has yet to receive the atonement for the wrong received from sin. Meantime we are "waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." In the resurrection of the body the fitting of entire human personality to be an effective instrument of God takes place. As Paul graphically puts it:

We wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be

conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself.¹

III. As the highest form of truth is personal, and as the atonement on the cross is most comprehensively expressed in Him who made it, so must the highest form of the atonement in effect be stated in personal truth. An atonement embodied in perfect personality is fully mediated when it has reached the production of perfect personality. Human personality was made to grow; and the atonement is provision for its everlasting growth. The life in this world is but its babyhood. Who can guess how much it may grow in the world to come? The greatest wrong of sin is its existence and reproduction; the greatest wrong to moral character is the transformation of it into the immoral, in which sin may ever abide and reproduce itself; and the greatest wrong to spiritual life is the degradation of it into slavery to the ends of evil. The highest effects of the atonement are seen in the regenerating of human personality, and in the awakening in man the life of God. This secures the growing up of a personality which lives free from the law of sin, and reproduces Christ's spirit of self-sacrifice.

Spiritual life means spiritual freedom. Freedom is the path which God made for man, when he made him. Any other road, however flowered and tempting at first, is the way to spiritual slavery. "Every

¹ Phil. 3 : 20, 21.

one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin.”
“ If, therefore, the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” Christian life is the life of full liberty. Christ is our liberator, in him let us ever abide; for spiritual freedom is the blood-bought boon of Christ’s redemption.

Freedom is recreated year by year,
In hearts wide open on the Godward side,
In souls calm-cadenced as the whirling sphere,
In minds that sway the future like a tide.
No broadest creeds can hold her, and no codes;
She chooses men for her august abodes,
Building them fair and fronting to the dawn.

XXI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

—*A. M. Toplady.*

Lord, I believe were sinners more
Than sands upon the ocean shore,
Thou hast for all a ransom paid,
For all a full atonement made.

—*John Wesley.*

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

PAUL said: "I know whom I have believed." This was the substance of his positive theology. It must be the substance of ours also. He knew what Christ had done for him; that was the knowledge of certainty. We know what Christ has done for us; and this is the most valuable religious knowledge which we possess. The conclusions of the mind alone may be overthrown by stronger minds; but no one can gainsay the facts of experience. From its decision there is no appeal. We know that bread satisfies hunger, and that Christ is the bread of life. What we know we know.

The great test of both theology and preaching is spiritual helpfulness. To attain this they must do more than minister to men's doubts, draw from more than intellectual sources, and have more than mental culture in view. Mental culture is needed, but not so much as the salvation of the soul. Lectures on the chemistry of food, and on table manners, will not satisfy the starving. From cultured intellects with small souls one turns away in sickening dissatisfaction. Men are instinctively drawn toward those who, despite meager mental attainment, are

large-souled. The new vessel of the Christian ministry must be dragged over the harbor bar before it can put out into the open sea of full service. This bar is appreciation of people solely by an intellectual standard. So it is with theology. It has been stranded on the reef of intellectualism, with great waves of criticism pounding it to pieces. Theology, once out on the open sea of spiritual service, could breast those very billows triumphantly. Then they could at most but wash the decks of the theological ship. We need a theology, the full usefulness of which is assured according to the standard of the heart.

In all science the order of procedure is from the known to the unknown. While attempting to learn the things we do not know, we must take our stand upon that which we do know. It will not do to construct a speculative theory, and then twist the knowledge of experience to suit the theory; for this would reverse the law of progress. The Christ whom we know in our experience as the Redeemer from sin, is not to be interpreted by theories which do not have their inspiration and substance from this experience. What we have known Christ to be, must shape our theory of the atonement; otherwise the theory will be mechanical and without the power of equating itself in the only place where it can have value—in experience. The Christian world has long waited for an order of theology, grounded in the facts of normal Christian experi-

ence. The theology founded upon the bedrock of experience, may build to the skies. It will not, in so doing, discount revelation; rather, it will lay hold upon it. Revelation is to experience what sunlight is to the eyes. It saves us from groping in the dark. Sunlight and revelation may become experience.

In his admirable Yale lectures (which might have been called "Pulpit Realism in Epigram") Dr. P. T. Forsyth says: "Our Christian theology has been developed as the intelligent expression on the face of a living church."¹ There is no living church except as Christ is its life. He must become its life by redemption from the death in sin. In the facts of his redemptive work must therefore be found the nucleus of a positive theology. In the putting away of sin, he became the truth and essence of our theology. He is the substance of our salvation, and the dynamic of his evangelism. The theology of a living church must center in the truth which works in saving the lost. The atonement is central in Christian doctrine, because Christ is central in Christian life.

Belief in the deity of Christ is a blasphemous sacrilege of faith; or it is justifiable and its maintenance grounded in the results of the experience it begets. If Christ is God as well as man, belief in his deity can be justified only by the greatest and richest of spiritual results. Looking back through

¹ "Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind," p. 262.

the centuries in order to compare the effects of belief in, and denial of, the deity of Christ, there is not a shadow of doubt as to which has vindicated itself. Rejection of the Lord's deity does violence to the Christian soul, cuts the nerve of evangelism, and snaps the belt that communicates the power of the Infinite. Who Christ is, is told by the horizon and light, the health and life, the interest and energy which he gives. If his person is in proportion to what he has done for the world—and it must be—he is far beyond the category of man, and though not the less human, must be classified as divine, as deity.

This is a world of God; but it is also a world of sin. One may shut his eyes to either fact, and then blindly claim to see. The enormity of sin is but increased by a refusal to behold the fact of its existence. The atonement is God's recognition of the fact and character of iniquity. To say that the atonement is what God did, in order that he might pass over sin in forgiveness, leads to the question, "What does God need in that case?" If we say that the answer is beyond us, then we confess that we do not know the meaning of atonement. If, instead, we specify some necessity in the relations of God with himself, we have removed the atonement beyond the pale of human experience. It then practically ceases to be ethical. When the Pacific Ocean could cease to be water, then could the atonement cease to be moral and spiritual. To be ethical it must deal

essentially with right and wrong. To be spiritual it must deal centrally with the impartation of a divine life. The extent of the wrong of sin is the realm in which the atonement must be defined.

Through the Christian centuries there has been a gradual advance in conception and description of the atonement. The greatest of the later books on this subject is "Atonement and Personality," by Canon Moberly. He grasped the ideas that the atonement is mediated by the living, personal Christ, and that the true measure of its effect is seen in human personality when redeemed by it; but he made a repentance-death of the Christ to be the heart of the atonement. Once, indeed, he said, "It is Christ, then, who, in the fullest sense, is our atonement." Why he did not construct his theory in keeping with this statement, why he came so near to it and stopped, will remain a mystery. As an example of the convergence of thought from different directions, it may be said that the present statement of the atonement was fully formulated before Moberly's great work came to hand.

A personal or institutional theory of the atonement reproduces the Scripture outlines of the experience of Christ in becoming the atonement by his self-sacrificing death. Each person is then left free to fill in for himself what he deems the content of the personal satisfaction of the Son to the Father and the nature of the righting of the wrong of sin. One thing must be guarded: the atonement is as

large as Christ. Anything less is but a fraction of it. Christ became the atonement in concrete by giving himself, a living righteousness, unto God and man for the righting of the wrong of sin. Being human, as well as divine, he carried human sin into such divine relations as became the means of his instatement as personal atonement. He gave satisfaction to the Father by his destruction of sin in his death; and still both immanently and transcendently answers for us before God. The love which died on the cross is now deathless in human life.

Life cannot possibly come from death; it comes only from life. Life and death beget after their own kind. We need both, however; we need to die and yet live; to die unto sin and to live unto God. The death to sin can be reproduced in our experience only by the power of the death of Him who in it became the death of sin. Life unto God is begotten in us by the divine life which even the death for sin could not stay in its natural trend to the Father. What there is for us in the death of Christ, is mediated to us by his life and person. Through vital spiritual union with him, the virtue and merit of the atonement passes over into our lives, and thus we become a part of him. The bestowment of the atonement is not according to the measure of the mental understanding which the recipient may have of its philosophy. It is according to the power of Him who is received by faith.

To receive the Lord Jesus is to receive the atonement. He is the atonement in embodiment and accessibility. The self-sacrifice of God and the divine self-giving goes on forever in him.

A little girl on board a steamer on her way to Prince Edward Island, said, as the shore drew near, "Oh, see! the island has a brick wall around it." The little stranger had mistaken the red soil and sandstone for brickwork. So it may seem to some that the present statement of the atonement is but the brickwork of another theory; whereas, the attempt has been to describe the atonement as it is in actuality. Whether I have succeeded, will be for others to say. The atonement might be called "The Blessed Isle of Redemption," around which roll fathomless oceans of truth, and along whose resounding shores one may walk, listening to the music of the Infinite.

Ever and anon, in the cycling years, we come to Passion Week, Good Friday, and Easter. To three places do we make pilgrimage: Gethsemane, Calvary, and the rock-hewn sepulcher. We linger longest where mystery is deepest—at the place where he died for us. Turning at length to the tomb in the garden, we rejoice because it is empty, and thereby the world filled with the presence of the risen Saviour. To-day all lands are more than ever agleam with the glory of the Living Lord. Listen! He is calling us away from his empty sepulcher to repeat the angels' toil, and roll from

human hearts the stone of unbelief in the crucified
yet risen Redeemer, THE LIVING ATONEMENT.

'T is from your hearts, beloved, that the stone is rolled
away;

The life for all men given pulses in your life to-day;

The banners of love's marching host are to the breeze
unfurled;

And the dawnlight of the kingdom is streaming down the
world.

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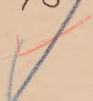
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